

Chiropractic Care for Children



Australian chiropractors are five-year university trained, and are government registered and regulated healthcare professionals. In Australia, the chiropractic profession is well established, with over 300,000 visits to chiropractors each week. Approximately 30,000 of these visits are children under the age of 18 years.

Safer Care Victoria Review

In March 2019, the Victorian Health Minister tasked Safer Care Victoria (SCV) to lead an independent review of the practice of spinal manipulation on children under 12 years. SCV wished to hear from parents of children who have accessed chiropractic care, exploring their experiences, both positive and negative.

Of the Submissions from the Public...



21,824 submissions in total – the largest of any public stakeholder engagement



99.7% reported a **positive experience** with chiropractic care of their children



98% said that chiropractic care helped their child, indicating **improvement after treatment**



99.1% indicated they were either **'satisfied'** or **'very satisfied'** with **information provided** by the chiropractor **about the benefits of treatment**



95.8% stated they were **'satisfied'** or **'very satisfied'** with the **information provided about the risk of treatment**



68.9% reported that they had also **consulted with a GP** about the problem

Safety

In Australia, there has never been a serious adverse event reported in the literature or in insurance claims, involving the care of a child by a chiropractor. This is despite the fact that there have been an estimated 12-15 million visits by children to chiropractors in the last 20 years.

The evidence of harm is low because chiropractors modify their techniques to suit the age and developmental stage of the patient across the lifespan.

Evidence of Effectiveness

SCV also performed a systematic review of the evidence of effectiveness for chiropractic care of children. High level evidence does not currently exist for many commonly used paediatric health interventions, including spinal manipulation.

The situation is different for adult care, where spinal manipulation for conditions such as low back and neck pain, rate moderate to high level evidence.

Evidence was found to be positive but inconclusive for some conditions, such as colic and bed wetting. For the other conditions – headache, asthma, otitis media, cerebral palsy, hyperactivity, and torticollis – the SCV review found there was no high level evidence that spinal manipulation was effective for children under 12 years.

SCV recommended allocation of funding for further research that may further clarify the role chiropractors have to play with paediatric health care.