

PDD DISORDERS—FALLON

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from being able to progress and learn, as well as potentially harming them physically if the ritualistic behavior is dangerous or disruptive.

We see therefore, that from a theoretical point of view, chiropractic theory has everything to do with the autistic child and with the PDD spectrum child too. From a practical standpoint, chiropractic care can address levels of sensory integration which could normally not be assessed by other means.

1. DEEP PRESSURE

The deep pressure aspect of the chiropractic adjustment is helpful to the child by conveying information to the child's nervous system. An entire tract of the spinal cord is devoted by the body to the deep pressure aspect of input to the body. This deep pressure is most often applied by the doctor of chiropractic in the form of an adjustment with the doctor's hands applied to the back of the child.

Temple Grandon and others, including

special educators and occupational therapists, will tell you that one of the most calming things to the autistic child is deep pressure. This pressure can be applied in the form of hugs, or in Temple Grandon's case, what she calls a "squeeze machine."

The PDD child in general may be tactile defensive, and not want to be touched, but chiropractic care often breaks down that barrier, though it may be slowly.

2. THE ADJUSTMENT

The chiropractic adjustment can affect much change in the PDD child. Aside from the general deep pressure aspect of the adjustment, the more specific pressure or adjustment is applied to a segment of the spine known as a motor unit. The motor unit is comprised of two vertebrae, the disc in between and the accompanying nervous ligamentous, muscular and connective tissue components surrounding the area. In the presence of one or all three of the T's, the motor unit function is impaired. This impairment can range from a *lack of motor nerve function, sensory nerve function, to alterations in the motor unit structure* which can create symptoms such as toe walking, back

arching, and even incessant crying.

An adjustment is given when a specific thrust is placed into the motor unit to affect change in that motor unit and the accompanying structures. The adjustment itself is enormously beneficial in affecting change in the body.

3. ILLNESS

Certain levels and types of illness can be helped with chiropractic care. Recent studies on asthma and otitis media speak to its benefits. In the case of the child with PDD, who may be more susceptible to the effects of toxins on the body, the decreased use of antibiotics and other drug interventions, when at all possible, could prove to be a great benefit for the child.

In addition to the fact that the structural and functional issues of the child can be addressed in some cases through chiropractic care, there is also some evidence that chiropractic adjustments increase the levels of neurotransmitters in the body. When the neurotransmission is increased, the immunoglobulin levels are also increased, thereby affecting an increase in immune status for the child. While the research to this cause and ef-

fect is in the early stages, the preliminary evidence, coupled with the 100 years of evidence from chiropractors' clinics, points to the advantage of chiropractic care for the child with PDD spectrum disorder.

A team approach

As doctors we need to understand the characteristics of the spectrum of PDD disorders. But it is also important that other professionals who work with the child do the same. Without the cooperation and understanding of the pediatrician, the educator and the school psychologist, the child is at a severe disadvantage. The cooperation of these professionals is paramount to the child's quality of life. The care of an autistic child requires a TEAM approach. If parents find there are road blocks to their child's needs not being addressed, they need to seek the help of professionals who do have an understanding of the PDD spectrum disorder. There is no better place to obtain information than from other parents who have or are going through the same problems. No one is a better advocate or a more formidable foe than a parent who has a child with a problem. I have heard the phrase "Autistic Militia" been used to describe a group of parents in a small community who fought the establishment until they had their own school for their autistic children.

If you or any of your patients want more information about autism the following resources are available:

- **Autism Research Institute**
4182 Adams Avenue
San Diego, CA 92116 • 619-281-7165
www.autism.com
- **Autism Society of America**
7910 Woodmont Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20814 • 800-3-autism
www.autism-society.org
- **Society For Auditory**
Integrative Technologies
1040 Commercial St. SE • Suite 306
Salem, OR 97302
- **CAN (Cure Autism Now)**
5225 Wilshire Blvd. • Suite 503
Los Angeles, CA 90036 • 213-549-0500
www.canfoundation.org
- **CHADD**
Children & Adults With Attention
Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
8181 Professional Place • Suite 201
Landover, MD 20785 • 800-233-4050
- **Developmental Delay Registry (DDR)**
4401 East West Highway • Suite 207
Bethesda, MD 20814 • 301-652-2263
- **Westchester Center for Education**
and Early Development (WCEED)
Church Street, White Plains, N.Y.
914-428-4280 • www.wceed.com
- **The Georgianna Organization**
PO Box 2607 • Westport, CT 06880
203-454-1221 (Auditory Integration)
- **Division TEACCH**
University of North Carolina,
Chapel Hill • School of Medicine
310 Medical School
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7180
919-966-2174
www.unc.edu/depts/teacch/reacch.html

JOAN FALLON, DC, FICCP is one of the founding members of the ICA Council on Chiropractic Pediatrics. An ICA member since her student days at Palmer College, Dr. Fallon is recognized for her special interest in autistic children and her research to find the cause and an effective treatment for this special group of children. She has made great inroads for chiropractic pediatrics with her published papers and continuing efforts to reach out to the public, other health care professions and non-chiropractic academia and educate them about the efficacy of chiropractic for kids and pregnant women. Dr. Fallon is based in Yonkers, New York.

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If you only know an answer or two, you need to attend to fill the gaps with what you don't know: New knowledge!

- 1. WHY** do some patients have ongoing pain after all possible tissue healing has occurred, and can we help them?
- 2. HOW** can a D.C. explain, to the insurer or jury, how the patient was injured when the car wasn't damaged? What information is needed to satisfy both a jury and Colossus?
- 3. WHAT** are the biomechanical reasons for both acute and chronic pain, and how can we manage them nutritionally, without our patients having to resort to drugs?
- 4. IS** there a model based on Guyton's Textbook of Medical Physiology that can help me find, collect and correlate evidence of soft-tissue injury?
- 5. ARE** there randomized clinical trials comparing chiropractic adjusting to the drugs Celebrex and Vioxx in the management of chronic spine pain, and how well did chiropractors do?
- 6. WHAT** diagnostic testing best shows the injuries we manage as chiropractors?
- 7. WHY** is the history the most important part of the examination?
- 8. WHY** would an insurer find chiropractic compared to medicine or PT the treatment of choice?

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