

Effect of chiropractic treatment of infants with **deformational plagiocephaly**

Sarah Whyatt BHSc MChiro and Christina Cunliffe DC PhD FCC

ABSTRACT

Background:

Deformational plagiocephaly has entered the spotlight of paediatric medicine in recent years. Given its increasing prevalence and long term consequences medical management offers few options. Analysis of the research literature reveals a limited number of chiropractic studies with significant methodological problems. This research therefore investigated the effectiveness of chiropractic management as a non-invasive treatment for infants with deformational plagiocephaly.

Methods:

This was a prospective quasi-experimental cohort study of 124 infants presenting at two paediatric chiropractic clinics with deformational plagiocephaly. The study took place over a period of 9 months. Subjects had the angle between their ears measured using an anthropometric goniometer prior to treatment and at each visit thereafter. Infants were treated using a low force chiropractic adjusting technique to restore normal cervical range of motion.

Results:

Chiropractic treatment resulted in restoration of symmetrical infant head shape ($t = 24.830$, $N = 124$, $p < 0.0005$, one-tailed test). A resolution rate of 98.4 per cent was seen, with only 2 infants showing mild residual plagiocephaly. The mean number of treatments required to achieve resolution was 2.4 and the mean time to resolution was 2.85 months.

Conclusion:

Chiropractic management may be an effective non-invasive treatment for infants with deformational plagiocephaly.