

British Columbia Chiropractic Association



Ipsos-Reid survey says B.C. chiropractors "own" back care issues in this province

For Immediate Release

(RICHMOND, B.C., 27 June, 2003) - A landmark study conducted by Ipsos-Reid for the British Columbia College of Chiropractors, demonstrates that the profession in this province enjoys overwhelming support, and more credibility in the treatment of back and related problems than any other health provider.

"B.C.'s chiropractors have a very positive image with the general public," the survey reported. "A significant number of British Columbians (chiropractic users and non-users alike) hold very favourable views of the profession. . . . there is some sense from the quantitative findings that chiropractors 'own' the positioning as 'back experts'."

The survey paralleled a national study conducted by Environics Research Group into the treatment of back pain, released this week by the Canadian Chiropractic Association. The Environics study of 1,500 Canadians (1,062 of whom suffered back problems during the past two years) demonstrated that chiropractic doctors scored a "very satisfied" rating of 69% among their patients across all provinces.

Researchers reported that almost two-thirds of Canadians experienced back pain within the past twelve months, and more than 70 per cent experienced back pain over the past 24 months. Other recent literature demonstrates that one-third of all visits to health professionals in Canada relate to back-related problems. Faster and more effective treatment could have a profound, positive impact on patient care and health plan costs.

"What this underscores is what we have been telling governments, health insurers and workers' compensation boards for years. They should fund the public's choice of necessary treatment for these conditions, rather than create administrative barriers that discriminate and make it both expensive and difficult to see the professionals who can provide the best care," said Dr. Don Nixdorf, executive director of the British Columbia Chiropractic Association. "The public preference - despite having to pay for it - in the case of back, neck and related problems, demonstrates that chiropractic care provides faster relief from pain without drugs or surgery, getting people more quickly back to work and into productive lives."

The province's 800 chiropractors treat 500,000 different patients each year. The Ipsos-Reid project in B.C. consisted of four focus groups (two each of users and non-users) in March, followed by 500 telephone interviews conducted in April.

Ipsos-Reid said that 85% of chiropractic patients reported that they had a favourable impression of the profession and 58% among those who had never visited a chiropractic doctor. The blended result demonstrated a "favourable" rating of 74%.

Asked about where they would seek treatment if they encountered back or neck problems in the future, 68% of respondents said they would consult a chiropractor. This represented 80% of users and a clear majority of non-users. Chiropractic patients mentioned the non-pharmaceutical, non-surgical care and more rapid relief from pain while those who were less likely to choose a chiropractor expressed concern about cost and lack of coverage in medical plans.

"There is a very important message here for health system managers in government, business, labour unions and insurers," Nixdorf said. "It shows that the public knows how to get faster and better treatment, and how to get back into productive lives more quickly. Health policies should reflect these public standards for care."

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