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Richard S. Koch

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CAUSES, EFFECTS AND TREATMENT OF UPPER BACK AND NECK DISCOMFORTS

Studies on 200 patients noticing various discomforts in the neck and upper spine between the shoulder blades revealed that 86% had other troubles in organs and tissues near by. Examples are heart troubles, both nervous and "real" (organic), arthritis of vertebra and shoulders, lung and bronchial troubles with weakness to germs and allergies, breast, skin, ear and dental conditions, throat and sinus susceptibility to infections, colds and allergies.

By manually feeling and by standing postural x-rays and fluoroscopic studies of these parts of the spine 92% showed obvious malalignment and impairment of normal vertebral motion. That is when the patient attempted and appeared to stand perfectly straight the vertebra in the areas of his discomfort instead of being in straight alignment, one directly atop of the other, were instead altered or rotated to one side or the other. When attempting to bend or twist that area of the spine the patient not only experienced discomfort but actually was unable to perform the motion equally on both sides. Stiffness or pain restricted him. The discomforts varied from mere tiredness of the neck and shoulder muscles when in certain positions to feelings of tightness, aching, kinking, soreness and pressure.

Intensive histories of most of these patients indicated that in the past at least one (1) old injury had occurred to the upper back or neck areas. Usually it was long forgotten or believed long healed, harmless, or too mild to have caused trouble.

It was also noted that in the majority of cases the spinal discomforts appeared years or many months before disease symptoms occurred in the tissues and organs near by. It was noted that a "flaring up" or worsening of heart, bronchial, breast, ear, or etc. conditions were usually accompanied by distress of the neck or upper back vertebral and muscle areas.

It has long been known thru microscopic studies that muscles and the deep skin like flesh (fascia) when injured even mildly are left with streaks of scars, adhesions or "gristle". It is also known that such gristly adhesions pucker, wrinkle, tighten and somewhat harden involved flesh. This is known to reduce the vital circulation in the tiny capillaries and serum (lymph) vessels. The condition worsens and tends to become permanent. Such drawing and shortening forces of these adhesions in the muscles around the vertebra can pull the vertebra gradually over months and years into malalignment and restrictions of their normal ball bearing like motions. Stiffness commonly is felt.

Research in Osteopathic Medical Schools has recently revealed the spine to be one of the most important organs in the control of health and disease. This is believed due to the now proven harmful effects that spinal muscles and vertebral trouble can cause in the nerves whose centers are inside the spine. These nerves vitally control circulation and exert considerable influence on body chemistry and organic health.

When osteopathic manipulative measures were applied to correct the abnormal spinal areas not only would the spinal discomforts subside but the organic problems in the heart, ear and throat, etc. likewise benefited. In addition to such treatment measures each patient was given detailed specifically tailored home "do it yourself" programs to help maintain the benefits of his office corrections. Such home spinal rehabilitation measures lengthened, softened and actually helped dissolve or absorb the harmfully shortening, hardening adhesions which help cause the vertebral locking, congestion, discomfort and remote organ effects.

When these osteopathic measures to correct and prevent reoccurrences of spinal and organic troubles were added to ordinary medical treatment measures of such ailments the patient responded far faster and with more lasting benefit.

The osteopathic physician looks with great respect on the importance of even mild ancient injuries to the spinal muscles and vertebrae. Research is rapidly unfolding the harmful unbalancing effects of such seemingly simple and mild mechanical problems to the over-all body economy, harmony, functions, and resistance to stress, germs, poisons, etc. Disease is more modernly viewed not as the germ or poison, etc. but as merely the body changes and reactions in attempting to remove the abnormal situation. The osteopathic physician therefore has an obligation to use his special training to help remove abnormal mechanical spinal problems to aid the body's return to continuous health. This osteopathic approach to health promises great hope for preventive and economical medical care.

In the light of the very high cost of over-all medical care of sickness it would seem indeed important for physicians to put to practice the osteopathic concept to more thoroughly liberate the body's own drug stores and nature's "wisdom" of healing. It would be far more economical for the health care of the public if all physicians were to more earnestly look for the minor mechanical impediments to good health, remove them and let nature's own resistance to disease and healing powers have a fair chance.

If a physician then ignores seemingly minor spinal disorders and fails to use osteopathic corrective measures to normalize the mechanically impaired body he would seem to be toying frivolously and extravagantly with patients' ailing health and finances!