



NEW ZEALAND RESEARCH FUND NEEDED TO REDUCE THE BURDEN OF NEURO-MUSCULO-SKELETAL CONDITIONS

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A national research fund to investigate how chiropractic and other forms of complementary and integrative health care can best help to reduce the burden of neuro-musculo-skeletal conditions is vital to the country's health research strategy, according to the New Zealand Chiropractors' Association (NZCA).

In its submission to the National Health Research Strategy Development being carried out by the Ministry of Health, the NZCA says to make a significant difference to the health of New Zealanders it is important that health research is considered in its broadest context, not just the traditional medical model.

Dr Cassandra Fairest, chiropractor and spokesperson for the NZCA explains: 'The chiropractic profession is often criticised for not having enough research to explain how it works. Historically it has been difficult for disciplines involved in complementary and integrative health care to be considered in public health research settings and gain research funding.'

But Dr Fairest points out: 'In spite of a lack of national funding, New Zealand is already a leading international chiropractic research hub with the award winning Centre for Chiropractic Research at the New Zealand College of Chiropractic in Auckland. The centre is dedicated to pioneering research that investigates the wide variety of reported improvements to health, wellbeing and performance while under chiropractic care.'

Funding is primarily sought from overseas; however some of the research is funded by New Zealand chiropractors and patients through the Hamblin Chiropractic

Research Fund Trust, set up by the NZCA over 30 years ago. All the proceeds from the NZCA's partnerships, such as that with Sleepyhead Beds are directed to research projects.

Dr Fairest adds: 'Neuro-musculo-skeletal conditions are becoming more common and costly to New Zealand society. Currently, research suggests that chiropractic care is safe[1] [2], effective[3], associated with high levels of patient satisfaction[4] and it is a cost effective approach for managing patients with a variety of neuro-musculo-skeletal conditions[5] [6] [7] [8]. A number of studies have reported that chiropractic care is often more effective than traditional management for many spine related injuries[9] [10].

'Chiropractic care also has an enviable safety record within healthcare[11]. Yet, to date, no public funds have been set aside to establish how chiropractic care and other forms of complementary and integrative health care can best help to reduce the burden that neuro-musculo-skeletal and other health conditions place on New Zealand society, and how it can enhance the wellbeing of New Zealanders.

'The NZCA believes if a government research fund is established that will give researchers the opportunity to explore these potential roles, it could result in a significantly positive impact on the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders over the short and long term. Having access to good evidence based practice in all fields of health care is essential.'

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