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Chiropractic Care for Improved Perinatal Outcomes and Lotus Birth

Introduction

It is the wish of any pregnant woman to have a pregnancy which is healthy and safe. This brings joy and peace. The same case applies to having a natural birth which is not associated with complications. However, the period of pregnancy is associated with some issues that cause discomfort. For instance, it has been established that about 50% of pregnant women tend to experience low back pain due to structural changes and adaptations during pregnancy (Stuber & Smith, 2008). This may happen before, during, and after labor. Despite this, it is only about 21 % of the pregnant women who seek medical consultation (Hawk et al., 2016). The rest choose to endure the pain in silence.

Some women have found it necessary to seek alternative healthcare services. These include those who use the services of chiropractors. Although chiropractic care is a vital healthcare practice, there is limited scientific evidence to support its effectiveness. Perhaps that is why this form of care is still not popular in many parts of the world. This paper defines chiropractic care, perinatal period, and lotus birth. It differentiates between chiropractic care and physiotherapy, and examines the role of chiropractic care in improving perinatal outcomes among pregnant women, and lotus birth of babies. The paper also looks at what the existing literature says about the care. It as well gives some important recommendations and reflections on the same.

Definitions

In order to manage low back pain and other health issues associated with pregnancy, pregnant women are increasingly embracing chiropractic care. Chiropractic care is defined as an alternative medicine healthcare strategy which deals with the treatment of various mechanical

disorders that affect the musculoskeletal system through spine manipulation and adjustment (Hawk et al., 2016). It is a healthcare practice which enables a patient to achieve positive health outcomes without undergoing surgery or taking drugs. Chiropractic care plays a crucial role during the perinatal period. This is the period around birth (Alcantara et al., 2012). It approximately ranges from 3 months before to one month after birth.

Apart from being of great use to the pregnant mother, chiropractic care is also of great importance to the newly born baby. The practice helps to promote the healthy and general wellbeing of the child. For instance, chiropractic care is essential for children born through lotus birth. The term lotus birth is used to define the practice of deciding to leave a newborn's umbilical cord uncut (Spear & Alcantara, 2016). The cord is left attached to the placenta until the time it naturally separates from it. This happens between three to ten days from birth. Chiropractic care helps to reduce pain and enhance the process of healing.

Comparison between Chiropractic Care and Physiotherapy

There is an overlap in chiropractic care and physiotherapy. Both physiotherapists and chiropractors treat musculoskeletal and joint problems in order to reduce pain, and enhance strength and movement (Gutke, Ostgaard & Oberg, 2008). It is also important to note that both chiropractors and physiotherapists are in most cases accredited to work and their practices derives from evidence-based research. Despite the similarity, there is a clear difference between physiotherapy and chiropractic care. While a chiropractor uses manipulation, a physiotherapist makes use of mobilization techniques. A chiropractor typically uses his or her hand in adjusting the joints of the spine and limbs of a patient who experiences restricted movement (Dougherty et al., 2012). In contrast, a physiotherapist treats a patient using various massage techniques, physical exercises, and electrical therapies

The aim of chiropractic care is to relieve pain and restore the functioning of joints. This is achieved through the realignment of the spine and the adjustment of the posture. On its part, physiotherapy aims at restoring mobility. It also works on improving the quality of life (Dougherty et al., 2012). It is as well important to note that chiropractic care can be provided anywhere. This kind of practice is not restricted to healthcare settings. On the contrary, physiotherapy is mainly practiced in healthcare facilities.

Chiropractic Care

The practice of chiropractic care dates back to the year 1895. It was established by Daniel David Palmer who examined the rational and effect of chiropractic techniques (Peterson, Muhlemann & Humphreys, 2014). The researcher made important spine adjustments that led to an improvement in the hearing of a patient with back pain. Since then, chiropractic care has played an important role in the healthcare system. In the United States, chiropractic doctors form the third largest group of professionals with doctorate qualification. That is, after dentists and doctors. It has been established that about 27 million people in the United States get chiropractic treatment every year (Peterson, Muhlemann & Humphreys, 2014). This is quite a large number of people.

People visit chiropractors in order to receive treatment for various conditions, including back pain and neck pain. About 35% of chiropractic patients around the world suffer from low back pain. More than 20% of the patients suffer from neck pain (Gutke, Ostgaard & Oberg, 2008). It has also been established that a lot of money is spent in the treatment of pains that can be easily treated by chiropractors. For instance, the United States spends about \$50 billion every year in the treatment of back pain (Gutke, Ostgaard & Oberg, 2008). Therefore, there is need for people to avoid such costs by trying to embrace chiropractic care

Role of Chiropractic Care in Improving Perinatal Outcomes and Lotus Birth

People of all ages and cultural backgrounds are now increasingly looking for complementary and alternative healthcare services. Chiropractic care tends to appeal to many. This is due to the fact that chiropractors never prescribe drugs and they utilize non-surgical treatment methods. Women who still favor home births and those who hold special cultural significance towards the placenta top the list of the people who are increasingly embracing chiropractic care (Peterson, Muhlemann & Humphreys, 2014). In order to manage the health of pregnant women and the newborns, governments have found it necessary to employ certified nurse-midwives (CNMs). These specialists help to provide care to the women and their babies before, during and after birth.

Stuber and Smith (2008) conducted a systematic review of published evidence in order to examine the role of chiropractic care in spinal manipulation and reduction of low back pain during pregnancy. The results of their study showed that chiropractic care promotes improved outcomes in pregnancy-related low back pain. In their study, Alcantara et al (2012) sought to characterize chiropractic care of various pregnant patients within a practice-based research network. They found that pregnant patients seek chiropractic care for wellness care and musculoskeletal complains with perceived effectiveness.

On their part, Spear and Alcantara (2016) examined the efficacy of chiropractic care for pregnant women having placenta previa and migraines. It was established that this form of care resolves placenta previa and reduces chronic migraines. The WHO (n.d.) proposed important guidelines on chiropractic training and safety. The organization noted that chiropractic practice tends to emphasize on the conservative strategies of managing the human neuromusculoskeletal

system. The process does not involve surgery or medication. It rather makes use of simple physical technique and it takes into consideration the psychosocial factors of ill health.

Hawk et al (2016) sought to update previous recommendations on what constitutes best practice in the chiropractic care of children. The researchers observed that chiropractic care can be used to reduce pains during infancy. This makes the practice an important initiative in promoting healing to children born through lotus birth. The International Chiropractors Association: Council on Chiropractic Pediatrics (2018) put forward important guidelines on the application of chiropractic care on young children. It was suggested that the practice can help to manage birth trauma, low immunity, infections, constipation, and other health issues. This makes the approach one of the most ideal measures that can be used to reduce infections in lotus birth cases.

From these pieces of literature, it is clear that chiropractic care plays an integral role in enhancing the health of pregnant women and the newborns. This treatment addresses health issues by manipulating the spine (Hawk et al., 2016). It is also common for chiropractors to make use of other holistic health approaches in their work. For instance, they emphasize on the usage of natural and non-surgical treatments that are drug-free. The specialists as well promote healthy lifestyle changes. All these efforts help to reduce pain and improve the health of the affected individuals.

Recommendations and Reflection

From the findings above, it is evident that chiropractic care is an important practice in promoting healthy pregnancy and lotus birth. Pregnant women need to embrace this practice. Chiropractic care gives structural balance and the required stability in order for the mother to feel comfortable during pregnancy. Pregnant women who are subjected to chiropractic care during

pregnancy also tend to experience short labor periods compared to those who receive medical intervention (Alcantara et al., 2012). Since the practice promotes better functioning in the body of the pregnant mother, chiropractic care can as well create a comfortable and healthy in-utero environment for a newborn.

Infants born through lotus birth tend to experience some pains and are vulnerable to infections. These children require chiropractic care in order for them to heal and have positive health outcomes. Since the practice is associated with the reduction of pain, it can help to reduce pain among infants whose umbilical cords have not been separated from placentas. Chiropractic care also promotes healthy lifestyles (Spear & Alcantara, 2016). This means that it can play an important role in reducing chances of infection as a result of lotus birth. For instance, the practice can help to promote hygienic practices in the care of newly born babies.

Despite being an important alternative care practice, chiropractic care is associated with some risks. For instance, the practice is associated with some serious complications. These include disk herniation, compression of various nerves within the lower spinal column, and stroke (Stuber & Smith, 2008). However, it needs to be pointed out that these complications are rare. What matters most is how the treatment is applied. Therefore, chiropractors need to be careful in the way they use this method of treatment. This will help to ensure that pregnant women are safe before, during and after birth. Those who are applying chiropractic care for infants subjected to lotus birth as well need to be care. Failure to do so can lead to negative health and development outcomes.

As far as I am concerned, chiropractic care is an important healthcare practice that needs to be embraced by many during the 21st century. Time has come for us to change our attitude towards alternative medicine. It is important to note that this form of treatment can help to

supplement conventional medicine (Hawk et al., 2016). I have grown up thinking that complications during pregnancy can only be managed through medication. I did not know that chiropractic care can help to promote positive health outcomes among women who are pregnant. It is my advice to these women to try this kind of care and enjoy the benefits associated with it.

What surprised me most about chiropractic care is that it is beneficial not only to pregnant mothers, but also to their infants who are born through lotus birth. Therefore, in the societies where lotus birth is still highly regarded, this practice can work well to ensure that the infants are protected. For instance, any form of pain experienced by these children can be mitigated through chiropractic care. It is also important to note that lotus birth puts infants at risk of infection (Alcantara et al., 2012). Chiropractors should use healthy lifestyle strategies in order to ensure that the children are protected against potential infections.

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