

Resolution of Myasthenia Gravis Symptoms Following Upper Cervical Chiropractic: A Case Report

Philip R. Schalow BM, MM, AS, DC

Introduction: Myasthenia gravis is a chronic autoimmune neuromuscular disease characterized by varying degrees of weakness of the skeletal muscles of the body. Crisis occurs when breathing is compromised. Normal medical intervention involves the use of medication; anticholinesterase agents, neostigmine and pyridostigmine; Immunosuppressive drugs; prednisone and methotrexate. Close monitoring is important as side effects of the medication are as overwhelming as the condition itself. This paper documents the effect of upper cervical chiropractic (NUCCA) on medically diagnosed Myasthenia Gravis.

Methods (Case Presentation): A 78 year old male presented with medically diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis. Primary complaints included; frontal headaches, inability to breathe, difficulty in focusing eyes, and arm weakness especially lifting objects. An atlas subluxation complex was revealed through a chiropractic examination and following the established procedure by the National Upper Cervical Chiropractic Association (NUCCA) including an orthogonal radiographic analysis. Within three months of NUCCA care after atlas correction using a 'triceps pull', the patient's primary complaints improved significantly. Full resolution of presenting symptoms occurred after five years of NUCCA care.

Discussion: There are a very limited number of research articles describing effects of chiropractic care on the resolution of Myasthenia Gravis symptoms. Most obvious is the apparent lack of upper cervical chiropractic care in the literature. This report is critical in documenting the effect of upper cervical chiropractic care on resolution of Myasthenia Gravis. Myasthenia gravis is thought an autoimmune process where antibodies block cholinergic neurotransmission to skeletal muscles with poor prognosis.

Conclusion: The reduction and apparent elimination of the neurological/musculoskeletal symptoms in this patient demonstrate upper cervical care has a beneficial outcome in those with Myasthenia Gravis. Future research is warranted to address the physiologic mechanism underlying the reduction and elimination of neurological/musculoskeletal symptoms originally observed in this patient.

Key Words: Myasthenia Gravis, upper cervical chiropractic, National Upper Cervical Chiropractic Association (NUCCA)