

INFORMATION ALERT SERVICE

From:

The INTERNATIONAL
CHIROPRACTORS ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION



RADIOGRAPHIC STUDIES ARE RECOGNIZED AS VALUABLE AND APPROPRIATE IN THE PRACTICE OF CHIROPRACTIC

A Special Informational Resource
from the International Chiropractors Association

Prepared with references from the
ICA Best Practices and Practice Guidelines



Radiography is a scientifically proven and clinically useful modality to evaluate multiple aspects of human spinal anatomy, biomechanics, postural misalignments, subluxations, pathology, and precision in providing important information and safeguards in rendering care in chiropractic practice. However, there have been different attempts by some third party payers and agencies, including insurance companies and insurance claims reviewers, to deny coverage of radiographic studies to patients and reimbursement to practitioners, motivated by economic cost-savings on their part. This emerging trend poses serious concerns in potential for reducing the timeliness, quality and clinical effectiveness of care, and even place patients at added risk by delaying and/or denying these established and proven services.

In response to the situation, the International Chiropractors Association (ICA) has prepared multiple resources and formal position statements based on clinical evidences and scientific references regarding the key benefits and utility of radiographic studies, including the acclaimed professional reference, the *ICA Best Practices and Practice Guidelines* document, a landmark document developed with the purpose of enhancing the quality of care for countless millions of patients. The radiography section of this reference document underscores that:

“Plain Radiography is fully within the Standard of Practice in chiropractic and has been for nearly 100 years. Chiropractors utilize plain film radiography to detect and measure subluxations.”

In addition, according to the *Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC)*,

“A subluxation is a complex of functional and/or structural and/or pathological articular changes that compromise neural integrity and may influence organ system function and general health. A subluxation is evaluated, diagnosed, and managed through the use of chiropractic procedures based on the best available rational and empirical evidence.” X-ray studies are a standard clinical tool providing necessary objective clinical evidence.

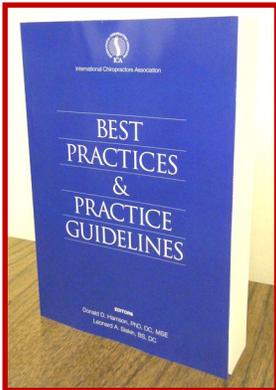
The ICA Guidelines provide extensive scientific references, established clinical and academic protocols, and indications on elements of radiation safety and quality control, as well as clinical indicators for imaging children younger than 10 years old. The ICA Guidelines document has been accepted for inclusion in the United States National Guideline Clearinghouse (NGC), a comprehensive database of



ROUTINE RADIOGRAPHIC STUDIES are RECOGNIZED as VALUABLE and APPROPRIATE in the PRACTICE of CHIROPRACTIC

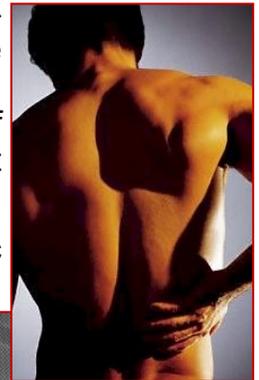
evidence-based clinical practice guidelines and related documents. The National Guidelines Clearinghouse is an initiative of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is also noted that radiography has been within the scope of chiropractic practice in multiple jurisdictions, including it having been recognized in all the 50 US states for decades.

The **ICA Best Practices and Practice Guidelines** document includes an extensive list of clinical indications for taking an x-ray image of a patient - such as history of trauma, including birth trauma; motor vehicle accidents, falls, and sports injuries; clinical condition(s) affecting the spine and articulations including postural imbalances, biomechanical dysfunctions, scoliosis and other curvatures, arthritis, restrictions or loss of normal movement, pain, subluxations - that indicate the relevance of performing radiographic studies, including the reasonable anticipation that the results of such a study will influence and help direct the chiropractic care of the patient. In addition, however, while guidelines are an effective tool to assist Doctors of Chiropractic in providing appropriate, effective, and safe care for patients, the ultimate judgment regarding the suitability of any study or course of action must be made by the practitioner in light of the unique combination of all the distinctive circumstances and needs related to the particular patient.



Radiographic studies are the most frequently utilized imaging procedure by the chiropractic profession to identify multiple clinical components, including fractures, congenital, traumatic, developmental, postural, biomechanical and degenerative conditions, ruling out pathologies, and assess indications for appropriate options in performing a spinal adjustment. X-ray imaging is an essential tool to assist doctors of chiropractic in determining particular chiropractic techniques and case management strategies, including referral to and consultations with other health care providers.

In addition, it is a usual and customary practice to undertake subsequent radiographic studies where they may be indicated by new circumstances affecting the patient, e.g., motor vehicle accident, frequent pain patterns, sports injury, or other clinical elements indicating the need to evaluate progressive changes, biomechanical dysfunctions, assess subluxation reduction and correction, and evaluate scoliosis or other curvatures, and to determine factors associated with sudden loss or reduction of clinical progress or efficacy of care. Post adjustment comparison x-ray studies are also standard practice required to effectively utilize certain techniques as it provides valuable information to assess the effects of the chiropractic adjustment and to assess and anticipate the patient's response to care and future progress.



For questions on best practices and radiographic studies in chiropractic care, and for orientation of insurance company staff about the necessity of radiographic studies for chiropractic care, please refer interested parties to the International Chiropractors Association Best Practices Guidelines - www.icabestpractices.org



The International Chiropractors Association is the oldest continuously active international chiropractic organization in the world and represents thousands of practitioners, educators, students, organizations, and lay persons around the globe. ICA supports and advances the distinct, unique nature of Chiropractic as a non-surgical and drug-less healing science, art, and philosophy.

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