

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Open Access



“What are the effects of diagnostic imaging on clinical outcomes in patients with low back pain presenting for chiropractic care? A matched observational study.” Jenkins et al., *Chiropractic & Manual Therapies* 2021;29:46

Mark A. Lopes*

Dear Editor,

Studies such as the one that is the subject of this letter to the editor [1] are important, and I commend the authors for their efforts. Their conclusions were that diagnostic imaging did not result in better outcomes. However, as described in the article, the findings from the paper support a more limited conclusion, such as "imaging did not appear to improve outcomes when used in an unspecified manner." We are left to make assumptions regarding how imaging was used to influence treatment, if at all.

The primary purpose of imaging, as described, was apparently to rule out red flags, which is also supported by the 24% referral rate for imaging. Imaging alone cannot be expected to produce different outcomes between those that received imaging and those that didn't.

This study did not control or describe treatment specifically or address how and to what extent imaging was used to inform treatment decisions. The patients in both the imaging group and the non-imaging group may or may not have been treated similarly. We cannot, therefore, suggest from this study that the lack of difference in outcomes between groups was due to the lack of additional benefits of treatment informed by imaging.

I hope others continue such studies, but there is a need to describe how imaging was used to inform treatment in order to determine whether or not imaging is useful for biomechanical or other assessments prior to treatment if imaging is to be used beyond red-flag purposes.

Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Author's information

Mark A. Lopes Volunteer Chair of the Research Committee of the Gonstead Clinical Studies Society; private practice 40 years full time; co-author and main author of several peer-reviewed publications and co-editor and major contributing author of a chiropractic textbook.

Authors' contributions

ML is the sole contributor to this letter.

Funding

Not applicable.

Availability of data and materials

Not applicable.

Declarations

Ethical approval and consent to participate

Not applicable.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The author declares that he has no competing interests.

*Correspondence: lopeschiro@yahoo.com

Gonstead Clinical Studies Society, 2107 Forest Ave, Suite 130, Chico, CA 95928, USA



Received: 26 January 2022 Accepted: 16 February 2022
Published online: 01 March 2022

Reference

1. Jenkins HJ, Kongsted A, French SD, et al. What are the effects of diagnostic imaging on clinical outcomes in patients with low back pain presenting for chiropractic care? A matched observational study. *Chiropr Man Therap.* 2021;29:46.

Publisher's Note

Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Ready to submit your research? Choose BMC and benefit from:

- fast, convenient online submission
- thorough peer review by experienced researchers in your field
- rapid publication on acceptance
- support for research data, including large and complex data types
- gold Open Access which fosters wider collaboration and increased citations
- maximum visibility for your research: over 100M website views per year

At BMC, research is always in progress.

Learn more biomedcentral.com/submissions

