Chiropractic Care:  
A Case Report of a Nine Month Old Infant With Constipation  
Milagros Rosado, B.S.,D.C. , Robert Rectenwald, D.C., B.C.A.O.

Case History

A 9 month old Hispanic female that presented to the clinic by her mother with a chief complaint of constipation. Onset was 4 months old, when she stopped breastfeeding. Frequency was up to two days with straining to defecate. The mother described the feces as hard and dry. Dietary changes were noted with different formulas since the mother stopped breastfeeding her including Similac, Alimentum, Enfamil and Nutramigen.

Methods

Adjustments to the first cervical (atlas) and sacrum were administered once a week. Observation of gluteal folds was used to determine side of sacral fixation and contact (see figure 1.) A series of High Velocity, Low Amplitude Thrusts (HVLAT) were delivered to the sacrum and sustained contacts were used on the atlas.

Results

After the first adjustment, the patient was reported to have increased frequency of bowel movements, but the feces were still hard and dry. Co management: After the second visit, the mother consulted her pediatrician whom prescribed Miralax, a fiber powder that seemed to be helping with the constipation. Also at this time several fruits were introduced in the patient’s diet. Three weeks into her care, the mother reported some occasional constipation. Five months into care the mother reported that patient was doing well with more frequent, softer and normal stools and that the constipation was resolved.

Discussion of mechanism

Two different mechanisms may explain how the adjustment affects the resolution of the constipation. First, the adjustment to the sacrum may have caused stimulation of the mesenteric plexus. [1,2] Secondly, adjustments to the first cervical vertebra may also have some effect. According to Gray, fibers from the terminal division of posterior vagus nerve reach the small and large intestine as far as the splenic flexure. Adjustments to the first vertebra may affect the function of the vagus nerve. [3]

References

Conclusion: The patient in our case showed improvement in the symptoms of chronic constipation after one chiropractic adjustment. After five months of care the constipation resolved. The results in this case suggest that chiropractic adjustments have a positive effect in the management of chronic constipation in children.