Integration of Chiropractic in the Equine Practice

The Back Patient

Back Pain in Horses
Symptoms /History

- Cold backed, slow to warm up during exercise
- Dislikes Palpation
- Dips when first mounted
- Performance problems
- Skin lesions/ hair rubs

Examination

- X-Ray
Examination

- Ultrasound

Findings

Vertebral fractures
(Stress fractures in race horses)
Findings

Kissing spines

Findings

Spondylosis
Findings

Facet Syndrome
- Irritation / inflammation of joint capsules
- Osteoarthritis of facet joints
- Caused by subluxations, and mechanical stress on joints such as over extension

Diagnosis:
- X-ray
- Szintigraphy
- Ultrasound

Back Problems in Humans
- 60 – 80 % of all people suffer from back pain
- Most patients with back pain have no structural pathologies that can be unmistakably named as the cause of their Symptoms.
- There is no close correlation between radiological findings and the clinical picture of the symptoms.
Kissing Spine Syndrome (KSS)

Research: Ranner and Gerhards 1995 – 2000
- 169 warmblood horses in southern Germany
- 55.5% KSS diagnosed by x-ray
- 27% clinically symptomatic with back problems

Enormous discrepancy between x-ray diagnosis and clinical examination.

Traditional Veterinary Medicine

- Diagnostic and Treatment of structural Changes

Chiropractic

- Diagnostic and Treatment of functional Changes
Chiropractic Care

- Adjust all subluxations
- Maintain existing function
- Increase range of motion in the rest of the spine

- Hypermobility is often compensation for decreased range of motion in other parts of the spine.

Chiropractic Treatment in the Rehabilitation of back Problems

- Treatment of Spinal Dysfunctions (VSCs)
- Restoring Movement of Vertebral Motion Units
- Supporting treatment in the rehabilitation of degenerative joint disease
- Supporting treatment in the rehabilitation of soft tissue injuries
- Geriatric Patients
How Many Treatments Are Needed?  
(Clinical Goals)

• Relief of pain and symptoms.  
• Return to full function.  
• Promote full healing.  
• Reduce the likelihood, severity, and frequency of recurrences.  
• Prevent the development of degeneration.  
• Increase performance levels.
Conclusion

• Especially when dealing with the horse, chiropractic offers the veterinarian additional diagnostic and therapeutic means of identifying and treating primary causes of musculoskeletal dysfunction and poor performance.
Conclusion

• Chiropractic Requires:
• A thorough knowledge of structural anatomy, neurophysiology and biomechanics. As well, knowledge of pathology of the spine and the extremities is needed to understand the principles behind chiropractic and to integrate it well within veterinary medicine.