



Backgrounder

Attitudes of Ontarians Towards Chiropractic and Team-Based Care

Introduction

Eighty per cent of Canadians suffer from back pain at some point in their lives. As the second highest cause of lost time at work, back pain is a major cause of disability and healthcare expenditure with direct and indirect costs of amounting to \$1.2 billion a year in Ontario alone. Better management of these patients through a team-based care model - using expertise of various healthcare professionals including chiropractors, physiotherapists, registered massage therapists, and more - is one solution to managing this common problem. In partnership with Environics Research Group, the Ontario Chiropractic Association surveyed Ontario residents to find out their attitudes towards using team-based care for their low back pain management. Below is a snapshot of the findings.

Key research findings

- Low back pain is a common complaint for Ontarians:
 - More than one in three (37 per cent) Ontarians currently suffer from low back pain;
 - Ontarians report missing an average of 28 days of work over the past two years due to back pain.
- Ontarians are frustrated by the lack of medical treatment options and the time it takes to resolve their back pain:
 - Half of Ontarians express some level of frustration over the lack of medical treatments to treat their back pain;
 - 60 per cent of Ontarians express some level of frustration over the length of time it takes them to resolve their back pain;
 - Only 18 per cent of Ontarians said their back pain was resolved quickly and easily.
- As a result, Ontarians are seeking treatment from a variety of healthcare providers. When asked what healthcare providers they received treatment from for their back pain, the top five were:
 - General Practitioner (GP) or a Family Physician (FP) (84 per cent);
 - Chiropractor (45 per cent);
 - Registered Massage Therapist (36 per cent);
 - Specialist Physician (35 per cent);
 - Physiotherapist (29 per cent).
- Most Ontarians aren't getting team-based care for the management of their back pain, but they see the benefits of it:
 - Less than a quarter (22 per cent) have experienced a team-based care approach to the management of their back pain, but the vast majority think it's a good idea;
 - Almost half (45 per cent) agree it's a good idea, and 47% somewhat agree.

- Ontarians support chiropractic as part of the multidisciplinary primary care team:
 - Almost three quarters of Ontarians agreed it would be a better use of our health care dollars if chiropractors were used more in teams with physicians to manage back pain, neck pain and other muscle and joint pain;
 - Over half (55 per cent) of Ontarians said it was very important to include chiropractors in a team-based care model for the management of back pain;
 - Over half (53 per cent) of Ontarians think chiropractors can play a larger role in disease prevention and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Methodology

The survey was completed online from April 25, 2012 to May 7, 2012 using Environics Research Group's online panel. A total of 1,231 Ontario residents participated in the study. A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of ± 2.79 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

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For further information please contact:

Sheba Zaidi
Environics Communications
(416) 969-2652
szaidi@environicspr.com

Miguel Pacheco
Ontario Chiropractic Association
(416) 860-7183
mpacheco@chiropractic.on.ca