

“The After-Effects of Polio: Does Complimentary and Alternative Medicine Help?”

By Dr. Paul Bruce

The April meeting of the North Central Florida Post Polio Support Group brought us a speaker who truly held our attention: Dr. Paul Bruce of Bruce Chiropractic & Comprehensive Care.

Dr. Bruce was born in Gainesville, Florida and raised in Ocala. He graduated from the University of Florida’s College of Health and Human Performance with a Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise and Sports Science. Dr. Bruce later received his Doctorate degree from Texas Chiropractic College. While there, he completed a hospital rotation at Houston Hand and Upper Extremity Center alongside orthopedic surgeons, medical interns, and physical therapists. During school he participated in research and treatment programs that have given him a vast knowledge of the latest, cutting-edge Chiropractic techniques and collaborative therapies.

Dr. Bruce was on the President’s List and Dean’s List while at school and received national recognition by being nominated to the National Dean’s List. He is an active member of both the American Chiropractic Association and Florida Chiropractic Association.

The former (former?) Gator has successfully treated thousands of patients including NFL, NBA, and Olympic athletes. He has received post-graduate training in Spinal Decompression Therapy and Low Level Laser Therapy along with certification in Florida Worker’s Compensation Health Care. Dr. Bruce is married with children and enjoys attending University of Florida athletic events.

Dr. Bruce started his program by discussing the benefits of a team approach for people with post polio syndrome. He recommended we do our “homework” in finding doctors that work best for us as individuals and who can work together for our benefit.

What is post polio syndrome? Dr. Bruce suggested that most of us with PPS have more knowledge of our condition than most doctors. Post polio syndrome affects 20% to 60% of polio survivors, yet there isn’t much schooling available for doctors because polio is considered “a thing of the past.” Most people think about the vaccine when they hear the word “polio.”

The poliovirus initially attacks the motor units of the body and the body compensates by adding nerve endings or “sprouts”. After years of use, these nerve sprouts digress causing nerve degeneration. Post polio syndrome is mostly a diagnosis of exclusion. Many tests can be performed before the final diagnosis of PPS.

There is not one single treatment for PPS; physical therapy is most often prescribed and many patients find warm water therapy beneficial. Most people with PPS are on different medications for pain, which can be helpful. Scientists are trying to find ways to stimulate nerve growth and they look toward stem cell research as a possibility in the future. Surgery needs to be considered with extreme caution, and the use of anesthesia magnifies the danger. Surgery can cause stress on the system and as a whole can be dangerous.

Chiropractors today offer many alternatives to help you cope. Dr. Bruce integrates a wide range of therapies into a patient's personal care plan, including chiropractic care, massage, physical therapy and rehab, exercise, Power Plate vibrational therapy, and cold-laser, just to name a few. A large benefit of seeing a chiropractor for these types of services is that they are able to manage care much more closely and more effectively treat the patient.

Doctors of chiropractic believe that spinal health is the cornerstone of a wellness-oriented lifestyle. This doesn't mean Chiropractors think all problems are spine-related, but problems in the spine that restrict movement or force bones out of alignment can cause a plethora of conditions including back and neck pain, headaches and osteoarthritis. They may also be linked with reduced immunity, impaired nervous-system function, gastrointestinal disease, high blood pressure and other disorders. Dr. Bruce can eliminate these problems through gentle, safe and effective treatments that can restore motion to restricted areas of the spine, while fostering optimal alignment and posture. Chiropractic is also safe and effective for the treatment of scoliosis. This is important because "form dictates function," meaning that a body out of alignment cannot function at an optimum level.

The Power Plate is an example of something that may be of interest to those with PPS. Since the body is so easily fatigued, it can be frustrating and hard to exercise. The Power Plate massages, relaxes, strengthens and tones the body. It positively affects circulation, flexibility, and range of motion with small workouts (10-15 minutes a day, 3 times a week). In just this short time you can strengthen muscles, enhance flexibility, increase range of motion, increase balance, reduce cellulite and fat tissue, and achieve a toner body. It is also beneficial at decreasing pain levels for those with PPS. Some of these effects can be seen and felt almost immediately.

Dr. Bruce also has a number of treatments to help with the inflammation that those with PPS can endure. His office uses ultrasound, electric stimulation, cold laser, and hydrotherapy. These can reduce inflammation and pain in the muscle itself as well as the myoneural junction (where the nerve connects to the muscle).

Chiropractors prefer natural alternatives to drugs because many medications can upset the body's natural balance, mask the underlying cause of the health problem and produce dangerous side effects, especially for those with PPS. Dr. Bruce identifies the root of your problems rather than "covering up" pain with potentially harmful drugs.

Dr. Bruce believes that all patients deserve doctors who care about their individual needs. For more information, you may contact his office: Bruce Chiropractic & Comprehensive Care at (352) 401-0060 or www.brucechiro.com. They are located at 2135 SW 19th Avenue Road, Suite 101, Ocala, Florida 34471, which is on Easy Street approx. ¼ mile north of the Wal-Mart.

We really appreciate the program presented by Dr. Bruce and I took the liberty of adding some information here from the handouts that he gave us. He was kind enough to answer questions after his program and shared with us some of his personal experiences.

Summarized by Sharon Daszczyński