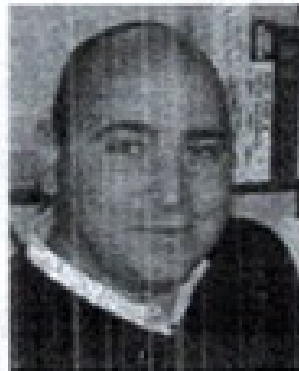


THE EXPLODING HEAD

By Dr. Derek Conte

Patty came into the office after suffering for more than five weeks with very intense, unrelenting headaches. She claimed a 10-out-of-10 on the pain scale. The pain was in her eyes, temples and the top of her head with radiating pain from the base of her skull to the back of her head. Patty said the pain was "as if the top of my head is going to explode." She could think of no cause for this, though a CT scan given 3 days after onset revealed a severe sinus infection, whereby she was given medication for migraines and antibiotics for the infection. But after 10 days of this treatment there was no improvement. Then a neurologist prescribed steroids and an antidepressant but her status still did not improve. All blood tests were negative. By the time she reached our office she was in a mental fog, her eyes half closed. She was in such pain she spoke very softly, as if suffering a terrible hangover. Her history included a right-sided head trauma in 1992.

Our examination revealed a very significant postural distortion with the head tilted and rotated to the same side, unlevel shoulders and hips, and a significant weight imbalance, the right side being heavier by >6 lbs. Cervical range of motion was severely restricted and painful, and orthopedic tests implied cervical and lumbo-pelvic dysfunction. The right leg was > 1/2" short, face-up and the left leg was > 1/2" short, face-down. There were many points of pain along the spine, especially at the C1, C2 and T1 vertebrae (the top of



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the neck and base of the neck) and at the sacrum (tailbone). This correlated strongly with Patty's pain pattern and symptoms. These areas control blood pressure, digestion, sensation to the head and face, heart rate, and elimination - all of which, taken separately or as a whole, could produce headaches.

On the first day, we adjusted C1, C2 and the sacrum. The next 24 hours, Patty was headache-free. On the 2nd visit we added a T1 adjustment. Patty's legs balanced and her cervical range-of motion had dramatically increased. After 5 days her headaches had become much less intense and her sinuses were clearing. Since her body was now balancing from the chiropractic adjustments, we introduced CranioSacral Therapy in the 3rd visit to address the old head injury. Patty was clear of headaches for the next 8 days. A smattering of mild headaches and a return of the sinus pain briefly followed for 4 days. We continued with the chiropractic adjustments. After the third week (8th visit) the headaches essentially stopped. Over the last 10 months, Patty has had only two mild headaches. Patty underwent surgery last month to correct a structural defect in the sinuses and we expect a continuation of her exciting trend toward a happier, healthier, fuller life.

Dr. Derek Conte is a founding member of Chiropractic Specialists of Smyrna on Concord Rd. and is available to speak to your school or group. For questions, call: 404-784-6008.