

## Best Article of the Quarter (Q2) Summary

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### The effect of chiropractic care on infantile colic: results from a single-blind randomised controlled trial

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Chiropractic & Manual Therapies volume 29, Article number: 15 (2021)

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#### BACKGROUND

Chiropractic care is commonly used to treat infantile colic. However large trials with parental blinding are missing. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect of chiropractic care on infantile colic.

#### METHOD

We conducted a multicenter, single-blind randomized controlled trial in four Danish chiropractic clinics, 2015-2019. Information about the study was distributed in the maternity wards and by maternal and child health nurses. Children aged 2-14 weeks with unexplained excessive crying were recruited through home visits by a medical doctor and randomized (1:1) to either chiropractic care or control group. Both groups attended the chiropractic clinic twice a week for 2 weeks. The intervention group received pragmatic chiropractic care including manual treatment and individual advice, while the control group was simply undressed and dressed. The parents left the treatment room while the child received, or did not receive, manual treatment, and they were unaware of their child's allocation.

The primary outcome was change in daily hours of crying before and after treatment. Secondary outcomes were changes in hours of sleep, hours being awake and content, gastrointestinal symptoms, overall improvement and satisfaction. All outcomes were based on parental information, through diaries and a final questionnaire.

#### RESULTS

Of 200 recruited children, 185 completed the trial (treatment group n=96; control group n=89). Duration of crying in the treatment group was reduced by 1.5 hours compared with 1 hour in the control group (mean difference -0.6, 95 % CI -1.1 to -0.1; P=0.026), but when adjusted for baseline hours of crying, age and chiropractic clinic, the difference was not significant (P=0.066). The proportion obtaining a clinically important reduction of one hour of crying was 63% in the treatment group and 47% in the control group (p=0.037), and NNT was 6.5. We found no effect on any of the secondary outcomes.

#### CONCLUSION

Excessive crying was reduced by half an hour in favor of the group receiving chiropractic care compared with the control group, but not at a statistically significant level. From a clinical perspective, the mean difference between the groups was small, but there were large individual differences, which emphasizes the need to investigate if subgroups of children, e.g. those with musculoskeletal problems, benefit more than others from chiropractic care.