

Policy statement by Chiropractic Australia regarding the Vertebral Subluxation Complex

The term vertebral subluxation was coined late in the 19th century at the foundation of the chiropractic profession. Like all theories in health care, our understanding of the term has evolved over the last 120 years. Today, it is best described as a biomechanical lesion affecting the range of motion of one or more vertebrae and which is amenable to spinal adjustment or manipulation. However, over the years because of confusion and debate over its use many chiropractors have abandoned the term.

The vertebral subluxation complex (VSC) is a conceptual model that has resulted in much debate and controversy. Some chiropractors use this model to inform their clinical decision making. However, in order to assess the clinical utility of the term 'vertebral subluxation complex' additional research is required about the following:

1. Reliable and valid means of identifying the presence of the VSC
2. The prognosis associated with the VSC
3. The most effective methods of treating the VSC
4. The safety profile and cost effectiveness of VSC treatment

The first chiropractors believed that vertebral subluxation was the cause of many diseases. To clarify the position, the General Chiropractic Council, which is the statutory and regulatory body for the chiropractic profession in the United Kingdom, recently produced the following policy statement.¹

"The chiropractic vertebral subluxation complex is an historical concept but it remains a theoretical model. It is not supported by any clinical research evidence that would allow claims to be made that it is the cause of disease."

Chiropractic Australia is in agreement with the General Chiropractic Council policy statement and support their position on the term VSC.

Reference

General Chiropractic Council.

Guidance on claims made for the chiropractic vertebral subluxation complex.

[http://www.gccuk.org/files/link file/Guidance on claims made for the chiropractic VSC 18August10.pdf](http://www.gccuk.org/files/link%20file/Guidance%20on%20claims%20made%20for%20the%20chiropractic%20VSC%2018August10.pdf).

Accessed 28 January, 2012.