

# CHRIS™

The Chiropractic Health Research Information Service™ – September 27, 2007 Issue 1882

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## WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE SPINAL STIFFNESS?

What factors influence posterior-to-anterior spinal stiffness (PAS) as assessed during chiropractic evaluation? To learn more, researchers used a system of electronic sensors over the spinous process of the lumbar spines to record displacement and force in 192 patient with low-back pain (LBP).

The results conclude that “the PAS system of computer-monitored equipment with human operation performed well in this clinical study of LBP. Spinal stiffness was found to be different between males and females, and age and body mass index were related to PAS. We found no significant relationship between the severity or chronicity of the LBP complaint and spinal stiffness. There was little agreement between the stiff or tender segments identified by the clinicians using palpation and the segment that measured most stiff using the PAS device.”

*JMPT* – September 2007;30:493-500.  
www.jmptonline.org

## STUDY HIGHLIGHTS HAZARDOUS SIDE EFFECT OF STEROID INJECTIONS FOR LBP

Epidural steroid injections have become increasingly common for the medical treatment of low-back pain with radiculopathy. However, this treatment has a plethora of side effects. Now a new study highlights another possible hazard.

The case report followed a 40-year-old man who suffered from severe persistent headache and vomiting (particularly in the upright position) for two days after epidural steroid injection for right leg pain.

Magnetic resonance imaging of the brain uncovered a right frontal subdural hematoma.

The study’s authors explain that “intracranial subdural hematoma after accidental dural puncture during epidural steroid injection is a rare complication. Persistent headache should be evaluated carefully for possible intracranial hematomas.”

*JMPT* – September 2007;30:536-8.  
www.jmptonline.org

## DRINKING ALCOHOL BOOSTS BREAST CANCER RISK

Alcohol consumption appears to up a woman’s risk of breast cancer, regardless of what type of drinks she imbibes. The findings are from research reported this week at the European Cancer Conference in Barcelona.

Specifically, women who drink more than three drinks per day have a 30% elevated likelihood of developing breast cancer, compared with women who drink less than one drink per day. Those who drink one to two drinks per day have a 10% elevated risk.

They found that there was no difference in the risk of developing breast cancer between wine, beer or spirits. Even when wine was divided into red and white, there was no difference.

*ECCO* – September 27, 2008.

## SOCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCE LUNG FUNCTION

Lack of family support and problems in one’s neighborhood are associated with greater asthma symptoms in children and adolescents, according to researchers in Vancouver, Canada.

Edith Chen, PhD and other researchers set out to determine whether, and to what extent, social factors influence asthma symptoms and lung function.

They recruited 78 children who had physician-diagnosed asthma without other chronic illnesses, and assessed the extent to which youth perceived support from family, support from peers and problems in their neighborhood, such as crime and violence. They measured their lung function using standardized spirometry techniques, and assessed their asthma symptoms based on interviews and daily diaries that the subjects kept. They also assessed behaviors, including smoking and compliance with medications, and evaluated biological markers of inflammation including IgE, eosinophil count and IL-4 production.

The investigators found a correlation between social environment and asthma symptoms and lung function. Asthma symptoms were greater among children who reported less family support and lived in worse neighborhoods; lung function also was poorer among children who reported less family support.

“Poor family relations may foster psychological experiences with direct physiologic consequences, whereas problematic neighborhoods may operate by providing role models for maladaptive behaviors,” wrote Dr. Chen.

Interestingly, peer group support had no significant effects on asthma symptoms or lung function. These findings suggest that among children with asthma, family and one’s neighborhood play a more important role in asthma morbidity than do peers.

*American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* – October 2007;176:644-649.  
ajrcm.atsjournals.org

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