

Prevention and treatment of low back pain: evidence, challenges, and promising directions

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Low back pain is now the leading cause of disability worldwide, with over 540 million people affected each day. *The Lancet* recently released a series of papers designed to stimulate a new conversation around the evaluation and treatment of low back pain. They cite improved integrative care and updated clinical pathways as possible solutions to the burdensome pandemic of back pain.

The researchers found a substantial gap between the evidence-informed clinical guidelines and the practical application of care. They advocate for a collaborative model of care with an emphasis on non-pharmacological and conservative care options (such as chiropractic) for the treatment of individuals suffering from low back pain. The role of treatments, such as injections and surgery, were limited and recommended in only a few instances outside of emergency situations.

Our practice fully supports the findings of these papers, and we endorse a combination of education, reassurance, exercise, and spinal manipulation to help our patients achieve the best outcomes possible.

“Guidelines recommend self-management, physical and psychological therapies, and some forms of complementary medicine, and place less emphasis on pharmacological and surgical treatments...”

“Promising solutions include focused implementation of best practice, the redesign of clinical pathways, integrated health and occupational care..”

“Guidelines now recommend pharmacological treatment only following an inadequate response to first-line non-pharmacological interventions.”

Treatment	Acute Low Back Pain	Persistent Low Back Pain
Exercise therapy	Limited use	Routine use
Spinal Manipulation	<u>Adjunctive Treatment Option</u>	<u>Adjunctive Treatment Option</u>
Paracetamol	Not recommended	Not recommended
Epidural Glucocorticoid Injection	Not recommended	Limited use
Discectomy	Insufficient evidence	Adjunctive option
Laminectomy	Insufficient evidence	Adjunctive option