



LAKELAND CHIROPRACTIC

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Antibiotics Overprescribed According to Sinus Study

A study published in the March 2007 issue of the scientific periodical the Archives of Otolaryngology suggested that antibiotics are being greatly overprescribed for sinus infections because most cases are caused by a virus rather than bacteria, and antibiotics have no beneficial effect on viruses. This study looked at two national surveys of patient data from 1999 to 2002 and showed that there were 14.28 million doctor visits for diagnosed chronic rhinosinusitis (sinus infections) and another 3.12 million for acute rhinosinusitis.

The study showed that in the acute cases 83 percent of patients were treated with antibiotics, additionally 70 percent of the chronic sufferers were treated with antibiotics. According to a March 19, 2007 article on the study, WebMD notes that only "about 3 percent to 5 percent of acute sinus infections are bacterial in nature, meaning that they respond to antibiotic treatment."

Dr. Don Leopold, chair of the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Department of Otolaryngology who worked on the sinus study commented, "We don't want to be using up our antibiotics on these people." He further noted that there are no approved drugs to treat sinus infections and no recommended course of treatment.

In an interview with WebMD Dr. Leopold added, "By the current guidelines it does appear that antibiotics are being overused. This may be due to the fact that we feel the need to give patients something and there are not a lot of effective treatments. And it could be that antibiotics really do help patients feel better."

Dr. David Spiro, a pediatrician and professor at Oregon Health and Science University, commented on the rate of antibiotic treatment for sinus infections and commented that it is "extremely high for a condition that, for the most part, self-resolves." He added, "Antibiotics are not harmless. They have side effects themselves. You can have a really severe allergic reaction."

In an interview in the same article, ear, nose, and throat specialist Michael Benninger, MD, told WebMD that in Europe, antibiotics are rarely prescribed for sinus infections. He noted, "In this country, I really don't think we have gotten to the point where we tell patients they don't need antibiotics." He added, "The bottom line is we should not be treating a virus with an antibiotic, and we should not assume that antibiotics are the best treatment for acute or chronic rhinosinusitis."

** Who do you know that could benefit from Chiropractic Care? **

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