



Case-Based Discussion – 10th January 2024 (Ref 343)

Discussion - A case of faecal impaction in an 8-year-old girl

In this week's CBD, we discussed an 8-year-old girl with chronic constipation. She has suffered with intermittent bouts of severe abdominal pain for almost a year. The case was presented by the patient's mother, who was keen to find some further advice to help manage her daughter's symptoms.

Symptoms of abdominal pain and diarrhoea first began in spring 2023 when she was diagnosed with gastroenteritis. Further acute episodes of abdominal pain met with the same diagnosis, but in November 2023, she was in so much pain that a trip to A&E was necessary. The paediatrician diagnosed chronic constipation as a cause of her symptoms, rather than a repeat of the gastroenteritis, and X-ray indeed showed faecal impaction. She was prescribed the maximum dose of Laxido macrogol which has subsequently been reduced to a maintenance level.

The patient still has symptoms of bloating and abdominal cramps and struggles to pass regular stools. The family has been supported by ERIC, the children's charity for bowel and bladder health, but otherwise have received little advice on nutrition or alternative healthcare that may help.

Advice from members included:

- Manual techniques (Abdominal massage, side-lying 'cup and lift' of the descending colon, sacral rocking, inhibition of splanchnic supply to colon, diaphragmatic breathing)
- Exercises to improve function of the pelvic floor
- Acupuncture

As always, communication and consent are key - the ability to communicate to an 8-year-old child with empathy, and encourage her to engage with a treatment plan, after what must seem an insufferable period of pain.

Linking this case with the OPS Themes

A – Communication and patient partnership

A2 You must work in partnership with patients, adapting your communication approach to take into account their particular needs and supporting patients in expressing to you what is important to them.

A3 You must give patients the information they want or need to know in a way they can understand.

A5 You must support patients in caring for themselves to improve and maintain their own health and wellbeing.

B - Knowledge, skills and performance

B1 You must have and be able to apply sufficient and appropriate knowledge and skills to support your work as an osteopath.

B2 You must recognise and work within the limits of your training and competence

B3 You must keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date.

B4 You must be able to analyse and reflect upon information related to your practice in order to enhance patient care.

C - Safety and quality in practice

C1 You must be able to conduct an osteopathic patient evaluation and deliver safe, competent and appropriate osteopathic care to your patients.

C6 Select and apply appropriate evidence-based care which meets the preferences of the patient at that time.

D – Professionalism

D9. You must support colleagues and cooperate with them to enhance patient care.

D10 You must consider the contributions of other health and care professionals, to optimise patient care.

Linking this case with the Chiropractic Code

Principle C – Provide a good standard of clinical care and practice

C1: obtain and document the case history of each patient, using suitable methods to draw out the necessary information.

C4: develop, apply and document a plan of care in full agreement with the patient. You must check the effectiveness of the care and keep the plan of care under review. A more formal reassessment of the effectiveness of the plan of

care must be undertaken at intervals that suit the patient and their needs. All subsequent modifications to the plan of care must be discussed and agreed with the patient and properly documented.

C5: select and apply appropriate evidence-based care which meets the preferences of the patient at that time.

C6: cease care, or aspects of care, if this is requested by the patient or if, in your professional judgement, the care will not be effective, or if, on review, it is in the patient's best interest to stop. You must refer the patient to another healthcare professional where it is in their best interests.

Principle E – Obtain informed consent for all aspects of patient care

E1 Share with the patient accurate, relevant and clear information to enable the patient to make informed decisions about their health needs and relevant care options. You must also take into consideration a patient's capacity to understand.

Principle F – Communicate properly and effectively with patients, colleagues and other healthcare professionals

F1 Explore care options, risks and benefits with patients, encouraging them to ask questions.

F3 Involve other healthcare professionals in discussions on patient's care, with the patient's consent, if this means the patient's health needs will be met more effectively.

F4 Take account of patient communication needs and preferences.

Principle G – Maintain, develop and work within your professional knowledge and skills

G1 Keep your knowledge and skills up to date, taking part in relevant and regular learning and professional development activities that aim to maintain and develop your competence and improve your performance and the quality of your work.

G5 Refer to, or seek expertise from, other chiropractors or healthcare professionals, when needed.