British Chiropractic Association

THE BACK BREAKING CONSEQUENCES OF TODAY'S TEEN LIFESTYLES

Adolescent aches and pains are being ignored according to new findings from the British Chiropractic Association (BCA)

New consumer research[1] out today from the British Chiropractic Association (BCA) reveals that teenagers are choosing their friends over their health.

47% of teenagers say that if they experienced any pain or felt unwell, they would do nothing and simply hope that the problem went away.

The study, commissioned by the BCA, reveals teenage priorities and, worryingly, health is nowhere near the top of their list.

For boys aged 13 to 18, friends are the single most important thing in their life, followed by social life, money, family and the way they look.

For girls, friends are also most important, but Britain's teen queens are pre-occupied with the way they look too - their appearance is their other main concern, way above their health and well being.

The new national study into the lives of UK teenagers is being launched to coincide with **World Spine Day** on October 16th.

Commenting on these disturbing findings Tim Hutchful of the BCA said: "Today's teens have become so engrossed in their social lives and with their appearance that the most important thing, their personal health, seems to have slipped off their agenda. Many teenagers are ignoring aches and pains which could lead to back and joint problems in later life."

In fact, **an overwhelming 62% of teenagers have already experienced back ache**. Yet less that 5% of teenagers said they would actually look to seek advice from a doctor or health professional, such as a chiropractor.

So what is pre-occupying today's teenagers? The survey results revealed:

- 53% boys and 63% girls spend between one and two hours a day using social networking sites like facebook and bebo
- 75% of girls spend between one to three hours a day emailing friends
- 66% of girls and 53% of boys spend a minimum of one hour 'preening' themselves every day
- Over three quarters (77%) of teen males and 84% of teen girls spend a minimum of five hours or more a week socialising with friends
- But only one in five teen males spend just an hour a week exercising outside of school or college
- 16% of males and 22% of females admit to not exercising at all in their free time

The research further goes to show how sedentary teenage lifestyles have become.

With nearly two thirds of teenagers already casualties of back pain, the BCA research looked into the causes of their aches and pain.

[1] Fieldwork carried out by Ciao! September to October 2007, base sample of 1,000 13 to 18 year olds

Sleeping in an awkward position was cited as the largest cause of back pain amongst Britain's teens (81%), followed by carrying heavy bags (76%) as well as sitting for long periods of time in the same position (59%).

According to Tim Hutchful, lack of exercise and a general apathy towards health amongst teens is taking its toll: "This research is a real wake up call for us all. It is clear to see that back pain is on the increase and we need to encourage teenagers to start tuning into and listening to their bodies. Friends are important but so is their health."

World Spine Day on 16th October is an International Day designed to encourage people to look after their backs.

This year the BCA has launched Straighten Up UK, a simple three minute exercise programme designed to improve posture. By incorporating just a few simple exercises into their daily routine, teenagers can really make a difference to their health. Visit www.straightenupuk.org for more information

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For further research/ information or to speak to a BCA chiropractor:
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Publicasity on 020 7632 2400 or email Sbailey@publicasity.co.uk.

Notes to Editors
World Spine Day, part of The Bone and Joint Decade Action Week, is designed to collectively promote activities that call international attention to the needs of people affected by musculoskeletal disorders and to promote a call to action on issues important to individual nations. The Bone & Joint Decade is a United Nations backed international multi-disciplinary initiative to improve the health-related quality of life for people with musculoskeletal conditions.

The British Chiropractic Association is proud to be a member organisation of ARMA, the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance, a UK based umbrella association for support groups, professional bodies and research organisations in the field of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions. ARMA is also the UK National Action Network for the BJD.

Chiropractic is a primary health-care profession that specialises in the diagnosis, treatment and overall management of conditions that are due to problems with the joints, ligaments, tendons and nerves of the body, particularly those of the spine.

The **BCA** represents well over 50% of UK chiropractors. Chiropractic is a statutorily regulated healthcare profession regulated by the General Chiropractic Council. Members of the BCA must abide by the GCC's Code of Conduct and Standard of Proficiency. The association only accepts graduates who have gone through a minimum four-year full-time internationally accredited degree course at an internationally recognised college of chiropractic education. Chiropractic care offers hands on pain management and focuses on muscles, joints and nerves. Chiropractic is suitable for all ages and can help with a wide range of aches and pains from head to toe. Chiropractors use their hands to 'adjust' or 'manipulate' the spine and joints where signs of restriction in movement are found and can also involve working on muscles. This restores normal function to the affected muscles, joints and nerves allowing the body to then get on with the job of healing itself.

To find out more information about the BCA please visit
www.chiropractic-uk.co.uk or call 0118 950 5950