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Vibrational Therapy and the Aging Baby Boomers

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Looking at recent statistics, the boomer population is going to increase by almost 70 percent over the next fifteen years. This is the fastest growing population segment of our society! The three most common musculo-skeletal ailments afflicting this group are osteoporosis, lack of flexibility and strength, as well as balance. In this article, I will show that Whole Body Vibration (WBV) therapy in the chiropractic office setting can serve the purpose of attracting and helping many patients from this demographic.

Statistically, the most common reason for which elderly patients are checking into assisted living facilities is not disease or illness, it is immobility: All those individuals have lost the ability to move freely around their homes, and therefore, experience significant difficulties in taking care of themselves.

Baby boomers

Many of them consider themselves part of the LOHAS (Life Style of Health and Sustainability) community. They are the people who are interested in the wellness lifestyle and want to be involved with their own process of well-being. Yet often they end up with some dis-abilities that interfere with the activities of daily living (ADL).

Here are a number of facts about this population group:

- **Many know they should be exercising, but have not done so.**
- **Many do not know where to start or where to go to. They often look for easy, safe and uncomplicated exercise choices that will not take a**

tremendous amount of time to learn and do.

- **Virtually all of them are willing to invest the time, effort and have the money to not only live longer, but live better.**
- **Many are already chiropractic patients or at least have friends that have tried our type of health care!**

Our profession is in the perfect position to assist this market segment in their quest. There is no doubt that it is the market to be in.

Over the years, probably the largest percentage of research about WBV was done about its effectiveness in the treatment of osteoporosis. Early studies in Russia were dealing with cosmonauts being subjected to weightlessness in outer space for prolonged periods of time. The lack of gravity had a profoundly diminishing effect on bone density as well as muscular strength. One of the therapies implemented was WBV. The results were very favorable. Since then, dozens of researchers in as many countries have spent years researching the effects of WBV as a form of osteoporosis treatment. The general consensus is that utilization of WBV in addition to weight-bearing exercise represents the best non-pharmaceutical treatment of that disorder!^{1, 2, 3, 4}

Similar results were achieved when evaluating the effectiveness of WBV on loss of strength and flexibility. Dozens of research projects showed that the "Acceleration/Deceleration" effect of WBV has a direct impact on muscular activity and strength, primarily via the tonic vibration reflex as described in last month's article. Numerous articles have been published on this issue and some researchers have shown as much as 24.4 percent improvement of muscular strength development over a twenty four week time period. This represents far better results than the control groups who were using traditional weight training(16 percent).⁵

It further shows that WBV, and the reflexive muscle contraction it provokes, can induce strength gain in previously untrained participants to the same extent as weight training!⁶

Thus WBV offers a fast, simple, easy-to-learn and safe alternative to going to the gym for the above mentioned Baby Boomers. The chiropractor's office is the perfect location to introduce and implement WBV. With its small space requirements, the units can be placed easily into a doctor's

office. Look for units that supply informational as well as instructional DVD's and materials that will make the training of the staff and patients easy and hassle free.

If the usage of WBV on the European continent is any indication, it is clear that WBV is here to stay and will become more and more a treatment modality of choice for many musculo-skeletal problems. Over the next years, more research will be done about WBV in the healthcare arena and lead to better protocols and guidelines. In the meantime, many doctors in the healthcare field are already using the beneficial effects of WBV to assist their patients and getting them to feel better faster.

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