



EPISODE 003 — “SUBLUXATION” AND OTHER \$25 DOCTOR WORDS.

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Spinal Column Radio host,
Dr. Thomas Lamar

Title: “Subluxation” and other \$25 doctor words

Episode Number: 003

Host: Dr. Thomas Lamar

Show Date: 01/22/2010

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Description: Sublu-What?? It's a word that many people have a hard time defining, let alone pronouncing — yet it's what we chiropractors treat. You won't want to miss this episode as Dr. Lamar demystifies this basic chiropractic concept and health robbing condition.

[Download](#) this episode by right clicking.

Links:

Dr. Lamar's newspaper article: [“Sublu-What??”](#)



Does your podcast listening schedule need a little backbone? If so, then maybe it's time to schedule an appointment with your podcast chiropractor, Dr. Thomas Lamar.



Transcript:

Spinal Column Radio, episode number three.
Coming up on Spinal Column Radio — Subluxation and Other \$25 Doctor Words



[intro theme music]

And welcome back to another exciting and information packed episode of Spinal Column Radio. My name is Dr. Thomas Lamar, chiropractor and Dad of 6. And this is the podcast that gets you to think. To think about your health in a whole new way. We're the podcast for your backbone... the podcast *with backbone*. Who knew that spinal education could be this much fun?

If you haven't done so, we'd Like to invite you to visit our podcast website at spinalcolumnradio.com, where you can learn more about us, podcasting in general, and can access the show notes for this episode. And of course You can also leave comments and ask questions. Additionally, you can shoot me an email at DrLamar@spinalcolumnradio.com (that's D-R-L-A-M-A-R @spinalcolumnradio.com) and I'll do my best to include it in a future show.

[transitional sound effect]

Sub... Subla...sublux...ahhh

The word is "subluxation." And if you can't yet pronounce it, don't worry, it took me weeks before it rolled off of my tongue.

Just what is it though — besides being one of those impressive \$25 words that we chiropractors throw around. Well, simply... it's what we treat.

If you were to look at the word and break it down into its Greek roots you would have *sub* and *luxation*.

Luxation is a "dislocation of a joint." And *sub* means "less than." So, putting it together you have "less than a dislocation of a joint."

[outro theme music]

Well that's going to do it for this episode of Spinal Colu....

[abrupt transitional sound effect]

If it were only that easy..... unfortunately it's a bit more complex.

So much so, that chiropractors have a hard time agreeing on its exact definition. With over 100 synonyms for the term (ranging from the impressive orthospondylodysarthritics to my personal favorite – spinal boo boo — I need to give credit to the late chiropractic historian Joseph Keating for that one), chiropractors have tweaked the definition of subluxation many times over their 115 years of existence. You know, chances are, if you ask ten different chiropractors to define a subluxation, you'll get ten slightly different, but similar, definitions.

Thanks to the Consortium for Chiropractic Research, a consensus definition was developed: This is what they came up with:

Subluxation – a motion segment in which alignment, movement integrity, and/or physiologic function are altered, although contact between the joint surfaces remains intact.

Hopefully that clears things up for you.... but my guess is that it probably does not.

Before we delve much further into this, I need to make a distinction to avoid potential confusion.

Our podcast today is focusing on the word subluxation in a *chiropractic* context. But this word is also used in *medicine* and has a slightly different definition. Actually, I've already shared that definition with you. It's "less than a dislocation." And that's about the extent of the meaning that medicine puts behind the word. The chiropractic definition, as I mentioned, is much more complex.

And that's really the key word here.... complex — only we'll use it as a noun. We call it the Vertebral Subluxation *Complex*. In that a *complex* has many different parts, or components, that work together to make up the whole. The Vertebral Subluxation Complex is a relatively serious condition composed of 5 separate components that make it up.

So, without any further adieu... the five components of the Vertebral Subluxation Complex.

[transitional sound effect]

The first component of the Vertebral Subluxation Complex is... watch out here comes a big word.....

Kinsesiopathology – This is basically a fancy way of saying the bones of the spine are stuck. In other words, they've lost their normal motion or position — making it difficult and painful for you to move, turn, and bend. Think of a rowing team with all of the oarsmen working in unison and then one of them stops moving, or worse, starts rowing out of synch. It throws off everything, and it sets into motion the other four components.

[transitional sound effect]

Neuropathophysiology – This is a very important component of the complex. Between each of the vertebrae, the bones that make up your spine, nerve roots exit. And these nerves will continue on, branching out and branching out, again and again to service your entire body. Each and every organ, tissue, and cell in your body is connected in some way to this network of nerves. When the bones in the spine lose their normal motion or position, these delicate spinal nerves can become [voice distortion on] choked, stretched, or irritated. — creating nervous system dysfunction which can result in numbness, burning, tingling, stabbing, aching, pins and needles....[voice distortion off] You pick the descriptor. And that's just if we are interfering with the parts of the nervous system that are responsible for pain. Keep in mind that nerves do more than just cause pain. They do everything from signaling muscles to allow you to reach out to grab that coffee cup... or to telling your stomach to digest the food that you are eating. They are the main communication vehicle of the body. [cell phone tones and audio connection on] Like a bad cell phone connection, nervous system dysfunction brought on by the Vertebral Subluxation Complex can rob the integrity of this communication link, bringing about ill health. And the sobering part about it, is that, at least in the beginning, you may be none the wiser. [cell phone audio connection off]

[transitional sound effect]

Myopathology – This component refers to the muscles that directly or indirectly support the spine. I did a quick count and, I was surprised to find out that of the some 696 skeletal muscles of the body, nearly 500 support or have an indirect influence on the spine! Spinal bones that have lost their normal function can cause any one of these muscles to weaken, atrophy, or become tight and go into spasm. The resulting scar tissue changes muscle tone and creates faulty, ingrained muscle patterning which further perpetuates the vertebral subluxation complex.

That reminds me of a story. Back in my early practice days, I used to explain the Vertebral Subluxation Complex with a set of photographs. When it came time to teach about Myopathology, I'd share a photo of a butcher presenting a piece of meat to a customer. The caption under the photo said something along the lines of "Like a cheap cut of steak, muscles can develop gristle."

A bit graphic — perhaps. But I'll never forget what one of my patients said — great guy by the way. And he happened to be a butcher himself..... He took the photo in his hands and examined it closely, and he said, "Hey!" That's not a cheap cut of steak! That's a New York!"

[transitional sound effect]

Histopathology – From the Greek root "histos," which means body tissue. When spinal bones lose their normal function, irritation of the surrounding soft tissues results. The term soft tissue, by the way, is sort of a "catch all" term that describes tissues that support, connect, and surround organs and structures in body. Examples would be tendons, ligaments, fibrous tissue, fascia, fat, synovial membranes, spinal discs, and blood vessels.

This irritation leads to a rise in temperature from an increase in blood and lymph supplies, ultimately resulting in swelling and inflammation. Discs can bulge, herniate, or degenerate. Other soft tissues may suffer permanent damage. Think of this kind of like a bad sunburn.

[transitional sound effect]

Pathophysiology – With time, the body will attempt to stabilize malfunctioning spinal joints by forming bone spurs and other abnormal bony growths. In other words, the “A” word — as some of my patient say. Translation — arthritis. Spinal arthritis goes by many different names —osteoarthritis, degenerative joint disease, degenerative disc disease, spondylosis, subluxation degeneration, oh and the “A” word. This “spinal decay,” if you will, along with long-standing scar tissue, and long-term nerve dysfunction can perpetuate other systems of the body to malfunction.

[transitional sound effect]

Okay, so now you’ve been introduced to the five components of the Vertebral Subluxation Complex. I remember, before I was introduced to this concept... I remember learning about the different components in sort of a disjointed way (no pun intended)... and frankly, it all became rather confusing until I learned about how all these components existed together and perpetuated each other. A great explanation I remember reading once described the Vertebral Subluxation Complex like a guitar chord, which, of course, is composed of several notes.

Let me demonstrate:

[Guitar C note] — kinesio**pathology**

[Guitar E note] — neuropathophysiology

[Guitar G note] — myopathology

[Guitar C note] — histopathology

[Guitar E note] — pathophysiology

[Guitar C chord] — Subluxation... [Guitar C chord] — Subluxation!

...2...3...4... [Guitar chord strumming start]

Hey, that would make a great song!... well, maybe not.

[Guitar chord strumming stop]

So now that you have more of an understanding as to what the Vertebral Subluxation Complex is, you may be wondering well, what causes a subluxation?

Well, the causes of subluxations are as varied as there are names for it. Subluxations can result from any act in which stress is placed on the spine and the nervous system.

We have three basic types of stress:

Mechanical stress such as auto accidents, improper lifting, falls, poor posture, repetitive micro trauma, a difficult birth, perhaps, poor sleeping surfaces... These are all are common causes of subluxations.

Another type of stress... **Emotional stress**... Well, this can physically manifest itself in the spine as well — such as deadlines and financial worries and traffic jams.

And then, last but not least there’s **Chemical stresses** to the body. And these can have adverse effects on the nervous system. Think of things like drugs, alcohol, tobacco, medications, pesticides, second hand smoke, air pollutants, and poor nutrition.

Your neighborhood Doctor of Chiropractic is specifically trained to detect, correct, and prevent the Vertebral Subluxations Complex.

You know, most people first learn that they have a vertebral subluxation when they visit their chiropractor for — say — an episode of neck or low back pain.

The truth is, pain is merely a symptom of an underlying problem, and it need not always be present for a vertebral subluxation to exist. The best way to determine if vertebral subluxations are affecting your spine and overall health is to get regular spinal checkups from your Doctor of Chiropractic. Think of it as Chiropractic Dentistry!

For it is much easier to stay healthy through proper maintenance, than it is to continually dig yourself out of pain and sickness.

Do you have a subluxation?

[outro theme music]

Great question! And I encourage you to find out. Well that about wraps things up for this episode. Speaking of questions, I'd like to hear some from *you*. Drop me a line on the contact page of our SpinalColumnRadio.com website, or leave a comment in the show notes. Who knows, your correspondence, just might be the topic of conversation on a future episode.

Spinal Column Radio would like to remind you that true health comes from the inside out — not outside in. As such, the content of this podcast, along with the show notes and related links, are not intended to cure, diagnose, treat, or prevent any disease. But, instead, is meant to inform and inspire you in asking better questions regarding your health. Since the circumstances surrounding your particular situation are unique, you are encouraged to consult with a Doctor of Chiropractic — or other health care practitioner of your choosing.

Hey next time on Spinal Column Radio... we're talking about Goldilocks and National Health Care Reform... it's sure to be interesting. Join us won't you.

So until then, for my son Logan tweaking the knobs on the mixer board.... This is Dr. Thomas Lamar, your podcast chiropractor.

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