

"Us Versus Them," or "Us Versus Us"?

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There is very little trust in a snowball fight. There's something about the chance to sneak up behind someone and jam a snowball down the back that's just too tempting. It is for this reason that I always pick a spot with a hill or dense trees behind me and everyone (people on my team included) in front of me.

When it comes to playing in the snow, aside from the cold blast in the face or down the back, the potential for harm is almost nonexistent.

The same cannot be said for the health care. The outcomes of these battles have significant influences on the economy, people's health, and health professionals.

As is true in many cases, the best may not be the winner. For example, IBM was the third company to begin producing personal computers, but won that war based more on its marketing expertise than on its equipment. The same holds true for many websites. Every day we see more of them going under. Some are good sites. But it takes a lot more than just content or graphics to survive in today's world.

Chiropractic is fighting for its life against numerous competitors that would like to replace us. Like the tactics in snowball fights, sometimes these other professions work with us; other times they seem to want to undermine us, or make us disappear.

The physical therapists are not the only squatters in chiropractic's backyard.

The acupuncture practice of "*tui na*" includes "manipulation techniques to realign the musculoskeletal and ligamentous relationships (bone-setting)."¹ Texas has recently been successful in clarifying that this practice does not fall under the acupuncture laws there,² but how many acupuncturists are illegally performing manipulation in other states?

The same can be asked of other professions. Which other nonchiropractic practitioners are currently practicing "manipulation" contrary to their state's practice act?

Meanwhile, the chiropractic profession continues its course of disharmony and disunity. We're so busy fighting each other that we don't see what's going on around us.

It may not be too long before we find ourselves listed among seven or eight providers that insurance companies have authorized their insureds to see for musculoskeletal, or even subluxation care. Each profession will be treated equally by the insurance company, leaving it up to the patients to choose for themselves. The patients will choose the profession they are most familiar with, based on word-of-mouth and recent advertising, something the chiropractic profession isn't doing much.

Ultimately, dominance may go to the profession that does the best job of marketing. (Remember the IBM lesson?) If so, we may be the underdog.

Being the best is something chiropractic can always be proud of. But it doesn't do us much good if our patients can't get access and the public doesn't understand the difference between an adjustment, physical therapy, medical manipulation, tui na, or whatever else other profession offers in competition with chiropractic.

As I've said over and over, chiropractic must tell its own story, or be drowned out by others who are more than willing to tell theirs. The battle lines have been drawn on all sides; the American Physical Therapy Association has made their position abundantly clear.^{3,4}

Chiropractic is still the largest acknowledged alternative care profession in North America. For over 100 years, the chiropractic adjustment has been without equal. Neither drugs, nor surgery, nor physical therapy, nor any other form of relief can match the healing power of the chiropractic adjustment.

We all know it, and its long past time we got together and told the world about it.

References

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