

We Get Letters & E-Mail

Proud to be a DC in the U.S.

Dear Editor,

I was privileged to attend the RAC IV Conference in Kansas City, Missouri in July. It was the first time for me to attend a RAC conference, and it was absolutely outstanding. As a trained scientist, researcher, MPH student and, most important of all, chiropractor, I was proud beyond description of my colleagues and of the impressive body of knowledge our profession is continuing to build. By accessing the specific expertise that researchers with varying types of advanced degrees (DC,ND,MPH, etc.) can bring to the research efforts, our profession is gaining in maturity, solidarity, validity and respectability. I do not mean to imply that we were not already in possession of all these qualities. However, not being able to communicate to those outside the profession in a reasonable and comprehensible manner has hindered the ability of the "outside world" to really know (like we know) what this wonderful profession is all about, including its possibilities and its value to all humanity.

Other health care disciplines, governmental and regulatory bodies, third-party insurers, and agencies that distribute the research funding have traditionally spent considerable effort and resources to try to make chiropractic "disappear" in our 116 years of history. After trying to absorb as much information as I could from the vast amount presented at the RAC VI conference (it was impossible to take it all in during just those three days), I now know that we will never "disappear," no matter what the "prophets" of our profession might say! I also want to gratefully acknowledge the Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research for granting me a scholarship so that I could attend the conference.

My faith in chiropractic was confirmed September 17, just six days after the most tragic loss of life due to terrorism ever to occur on American soil, when I witnessed something that made my heart absolutely swell with pride! On MSNBC, video from the first camera crew allowed into "Ground Zero" (as part of Lower Manhattan is now called) was broadcast. Cameras surveyed the command center, coordinating the rescue and recovery efforts; the site of the destruction; the helping hands of many different agencies; and professions put in place to help the victims and the rescuers.

Like everyone who has followed this event, I suppose, my mind soon started to go into the mode of trying to filter out the unrelenting input of absolute horror and destruction and despair. There seemed to be no rational way to give meaning to it all. I started to consider turning the channel, but then a narrator began describing the activity at a cafe near to the site of the World Trade Center. A makeshift clinic was set up by chiropractors and massage therapists to minister to the battered bodies of the rescue workers on their all-too-scarce breaks from their gruesome tasks. I saw people touching, adjusting, healing, responding to the need as it arose, knowing that their life's calling could be put to use in such a place of total devastation.

I had been personally anguishing that it seemed only emergency medical and nursing skills were wanted or needed at Ground Zero. Surely there was something that alternative health care providers could do. It was an answer to prayer, and, I hope, a witness to the world of the value of

our healing art and science. I am sure the workers who were treated by these doctors and therapists had relief of physical pain, and hope that they were relieved of some of the emotional and psychological trauma they endured in their noble efforts. Innate, that ever-present healing force in our bodies placed there by our creator, was being given a chance to more fully function in the injured bodies of those being treated. D.D. and B.J. would be very proud; I certainly am. I salute those unnamed ambassadors of our profession, and hope we can someday have a chance to know of their experiences.

Editor's note: The experiences of one of the DCs at Ground Zero were published in the October 22 issue. See "My World Trade Center Experience - a Diary" by Gary Deutchman,DC. (On line at www.chiroweb.com/archives/19/22/03.html)

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"The Times They Are 'a Changin'"

Dear Editor,

After reading Dr. Reed Philips' opinion of chiropractic's fear of public-funded education, I feel obliged to express my thoughts. About 40 years ago, I graduated from chiropractic college, and the prevailing science and academics stated the following:

1. Diet was not important.
2. Environment was unrelated to disease.
3. Vitamins and minerals were things quacks prescribed and weird people took.
4. If you had an infection, you took antibiotics regardless of the infection's agent,
5. Results from chiropractic adjustments were mental.
6. A renowned Yale professor declared that vertebrae don't move with a manual thrust. He offered his cadaver observations as proof.
7. Germs were emphasized as the cause of disease.
8. Host resistance was unmentioned.
9. Rene Dubois, a future Nobel Laureate, was ignored because of his appreciation of the role of host resistance in the development of disease.
10. Tonsils and adenoids needed to be surgically removed in children.
11. The appendix was unimportant, and was removed while the abdomen was open for surgery for another organ.
12. Chiropractors were uneducated quacks.
13. Only poorly educated and low income people used chiropractic services.
14. Adverse drug reactions didn't occur, so no need to track them.
15. Malpractice was the result of greedy lawyers and contingency fee arrangements.
16. It was unethical to accept patients from chiropractors.

My list of "scientific facts" could go on *ad infinitum*. Suffice it to say that today's facts are tomorrow's fallacies.

The profession of chiropractic is not afraid of engaging research and open-minded academics. My experience from talking to college presidents is that they welcome collaboration and encourage it.

Thus, the choice for the chiropractic profession is not isolation, as Dr. Phillips suggests, but subjugation to a philosophy of health that is the antithesis of ours.

Finally, Dr. Philips is guilty of a fallacy of logic by excluding the middle. That is, chiropractic can be

an autonomous profession and at the same time engage in the pursuit of knowledge. One does not negate the other. Let us be proud of our heritage and realize it takes greater sacrifice to be autonomous than to be seduced by easy money. The conversion of homeopaths and osteopaths to allopathic domination was not a matter of science: it was a matter of financial and social acceptance. Furthermore, Americans enjoy a pluralistic health system, so why not encourage clinical competition and cooperate in the patient's interest. What chiropractic needs is equal opportunity for our research infrastructure, and not the bias we continue to face from the NIH, DOD, VA, etc.

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"unannounced, unapproved"

Dear Editor,

Dr. James Womelduff's letter ("An All-Too-Common Tale," *DC*, September 24 issue) made me furious. He apparently feels it is okay to go into a hospital unannounced, unapproved, and treat patients. I'm sure he feels he is being singled out "politically" because the administrator chewed him out.

But consider this: How would Dr. Womelduff, or any other DC for that matter, feel if one entered a treatment room in one's own office, and there, unannounced, unapproved, was a dermatologist removing a mole, or an orthopedist doing a medial meniscectomy? Does anyone think for one minute that a medical doctor can go into a hospital and start operating without first obtaining hospital privileges?

The fact is that the doctor's blatant disregard for procedures, and his disrespect for the doctors managing this patient, was not only a public relations nightmare for chiropractic in that town, but also opened the hospital up to vicarious liability had anything gone wrong. How much better would it have been if he and his patient had tried to go through proper channels? Even if they did not succeed, it could have been a positive learning experience for the hospital, rather than convincing the administrators and doctors of the hospital that chiropractors are akin to stalkers, lurking in the shadows, ready to pounce on hospital patients if they drop their guard.

Dr. Womelduff owes those working at his local hospital a sincere apology. I think it is a wonder they didn't call the police.

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