

## Chiropractors Link Fibromyalgia to Thyroid Disease

STUDY AVAILABLE FOR FREE ON LINE

Editorial Staff

This past May, DCs John Lowe and Gina Honeyman-Lowe traveled to Grenoble and Toulon, France as representatives of the Fibromyalgia Research Foundation to present a paper at two medical conferences. Their paper contends that up to 90 percent of fibromyalgia patients have underlying thyroid disease.

"The importance of the announcement," said Dr. Lowe, "is that until now, no underlying cause of fibromyalgia was known. This is no longer true. We now know that thyroid disease is the most common underlying mechanism of fibromyalgia."

Fibromyalgia is an increasingly common condition that causes chronic, widespread pain, fatigue and sleep disturbance. Between 2-12 percent of the populations of most industrialized countries are afflicted with fibromyalgia. Patients with the condition also suffer from dry skin, cognitive dysfunction and depression, and many female fibromyalgia patients have menstrual abnormalities.

Drs. Lowe and Honeyman-Lowe first presented their findings at the international conference of the French Fibromyalgia Association in Grenoble on May 6. Five days later, they discussed their findings at a rheumatology and fibromyalgia conference at the Centre Hospitalier Intercommunal in Toulon.

Their paper - "Fibromyalgia and Thyroid Disease" - examines a number of fibromyalgia studies conducted over 10 years. The studies mainly involved multidisciplinary researchers with the Fibromyalgia Research Foundation; Baylor Medical School in Houston, Texas; the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston; and the Centre Hospitalier Intercommunal. Studies conducted by the researchers included extensive laboratory testing of the thyroid gland, pituitary gland, and hypothalamus in fibromyalgia patients. The studies also included treatment trials in which patients underwent thyroid hormone therapy, chiropractic and treatment.

Dr. Lowe explained the findings: "Our studies show that most patients have at least one of three forms of thyroid disease: primary hypothyroidism (due to failure of the thyroid gland), central hypothyroidism (due to failure of the pituitary gland or the hypothalamus in the brain), or cellular resistance to thyroid hormone. The treatment, to be effective, must be based on the individual patient's underlying thyroid disease. Rather than involving only the use of thyroid hormone, the treatment must involve a holistic approach to rehabilitating the patient metabolically."

"Our finding," added Dr. Honeyman-Lowe, "explains why conventional medical treatments for fibromyalgia don't work. For most patients, fibromyalgia symptoms are caused mainly by a thyroid hormone deficiency, resistance to thyroid hormone, or both. Conventional medications prescribed for fibromyalgia are antidepressants, painkillers, and muscle relaxants. Physicians prescribe these in the hope that they will reduce patients' suffering. But the medications help little if any, and they don't correct the underlying metabolic problem."

The full text of "Fibromyalgia and Thyroid Disease" is available for download on the Lowes' website (<http://www.drlowe.com/france.htm>). Users without Internet access can order copies of the study by sending \$1.00 and a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Fibromyalgia Research Foundation, PO Box 396, Tulsa, OK 74101.

---

### ACA and ACC Offer Chiropractic Speakers to Medical Schools

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) and the Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) have joined forces to promote the benefits of chiropractic care to medical students across the country. In a letter sent to approximately 30 medical schools, both organizations have offered to open the lines of communication between the two professions by providing chiropractic presentations to students.

The letter was co-written by ACA President James Mertz and ACC President Kenneth Padgett. It reads, in part:

In just the past year and a half, two major medical reports have documented the trend to combine traditional medical care with alternative health care approaches. The September 2, 1998 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* reported on the growing number of U.S. medical schools offering courses that introduce students to the various forms of alternative therapies, as well as teach them to work with patients who need or want to be treated by alternative health care providers. A study published in the November 11, 1998 issue of *JAMA* found that four out of 10 Americans used at least one alternative therapy in 1997, with 90 percent of those patients receiving chiropractic care.

These reports are prime examples of how far both of the professions have come in the past two decades. Today, professional relationships that were once considered unethical are being encouraged in medical and chiropractic schools across the country. Science, clinical effectiveness, patient outcomes and satisfaction are all blending to reveal the wisdom of this approach.

---

### Alternative Care Commission to Begin Meetings in July

Nearly two years after it was approved by Congress, a White House commission on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is expected to begin meeting in July. The commission will be responsible for making recommendations to Congress about policies for research, training, insurance coverage, licensing, and other issues facing complementary and alternative medicine.

Under Sen. Harkin's guidance, the National Institutes of Health has expanded its research of CAM from just \$2 million in 1992 to \$100 million this year. In 1998, the NIH established the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Practices (NCCAMP), which has the ability to award grants and fund research without first clearing proposals through the NIH. An additional \$1 million had been appropriated by Congress in 1998 to establish and operate the White House commission, Sen. Harkin said, but it had never been officially formed until now.

---

### LACC Leading the Way in Ayurvedic Research

As the amount of research into chiropractic has grown over the past few decades, so has that into other systems of health care. One system that has begun to receive wide attention in the last few years is *ayurveda*, a model of care that, while hundreds of years older than chiropractic, espouses many of the same beliefs toward health and wellness as its younger counterpart.

Ayurveda is "a traditional system of medicine that has been practiced in India since the first century A.D.," according to Dr. Betsy Singh, a dean of research at Los Angeles College of Chiropractic. "It utilizes a combination of diet, lifestyle changes, herbal supplements, meditation and the like in preventing and treating a variety of health complaints."

Most of the current chiropractic research into ayurveda is being conducted at LACC under the supervision of Dr. Lakshmi Mishra, the school's principal investigator. With his guidance, the college has set up its own research division of ayurvedic medicine and has issued five manuscripts about the system in the last two years.

"Our investigations of ayurveda to date have focused on supplements, which may be used, in conjunction with a healthy lifestyle, to control pain, inflammation and other symptom profiles of patients with a variety of musculoskeletal disorders," said Dr. Singh. "The economic implications of the use of these therapies, and the integration into the chiropractic practice model, are also of interest to the college."

In addition to studies at LACC, Dr. Mishra said the school is also collaborating with scientists at other universities on pilot studies regarding supplements. "The findings thus far indicate that ayurvedic supplements can be beneficial with few, if any, side effects," said Mishra.

With more people seeking alternative forms of care each year, more research needs to be done to validate these forms of care and ensure patient safety. By conducting research into chiropractic, ayurveda and other types of health care, LACC is keeping the best interest of the patients in mind while helping them improve the quality of their lives.

"LACC is obligated ... to conduct research on alternative therapies," added Dr. Reed B. Phillips, the college's president. "Ayurvedic medicine is only one of the disciplines we are focusing on, and as the college diversifies its curriculum, we plan to become actively involved in additional research that will enhance the lives of those who trust chiropractic as their primary choice for health care."

---

### Foot Levelers and NYCC Team Up to Create Gait Lab

One difficulty chiropractors often face is the inability of their patients to "keep" or preserve a chiropractic adjustment after treatment, especially once a patient is back on their feet and walking. To shed more light on this issue, Foot Levelers and New York Chiropractic College have combined forces to create a biomechanics/gait laboratory and conduct research at NYCC.

Much of the equipment for the laboratory was purchased through a fund provided by Foot Levelers. In return, NYCC matched Foot Levelers' contribution by purchasing other equipment and constructing a laboratory.

Research projects currently underway at the lab are designed to measure the effects of foot orthotics and chiropractic adjustments on posture, balance and gait. The lab has developed tools and protocols to measure body symmetry within the lower extremities, spine and upper extremities in subjects while walking, running and other physical activities. The research employs kinematics, kinetics and EMG to measure how walking affects the spine and other body components.

"Research simply for the sake of research is worthless," observed Kent Greenawalt, president of Foot Levelers. "Only when it is used to help treat patients more competently and is incorporated into examinations does it find its true value."

By examining the effects that chiropractic adjustments and foot orthotics have on walking, the research seeks to better understand how misalignments in the lower extremities influence functioning in the upper body. Such knowledge will not only heighten a chiropractor's ability to treat patients, but could lead to better acceptance of chiropractic by other health care providers.

---

#### NCC Students Win Poster Awards at Functional Foods Conference

Two students from the National College of Chiropractic walked away with poster awards at the Functional Foods for Health Ninth Annual Retreat. Sixth-trimester student Oliver Trochta and fifth-trimester student Marco Sacchetti placed first and second, respectively, in the "applied sciences" category at the conference, which was held in Urbana, Illinois this past May.

Trochta's poster demonstrated findings that indicate one of the active ingredients in St. John's wort is effective in combination with vitamin A in treating cancer cells found in childhood leukemia. Sacchetti's poster displayed evidence that tea tree oil and vitamin A enhance the maturation of human leukemia cells in order to augment therapy. (*Editor's note:* Beginning September 1, 2000, the National College of Chiropractic will be known as the National University of Health Sciences.)

---

#### Arizona DC Wins Broadcasting Award

Bruce Weary, DC, a 1978 graduate of Palmer College of Chiropractic, was honored with a first-place prize among Division III radio stations for his "Health Talk" radio show. Dr. Weary received the award this past June at the annual Associated Press Arizona Broadcasters Association Awards Competition in Phoenix, Arizona.

"I'm honored by this award and hope that it serves as evidence that our message of health is reaching greater numbers of people," said Dr. Weary upon accepting the award.

"Health Talk" has been on the air for nearly nine years. Dr. Weary has interviewed dozens of local physicians and surgeons and a number of national celebrities, including Pat Boone, Glenn Campbell, and Arizona Senator John McCain. In addition to his radio program, Dr. Weary also appears on a local cable magazine show that reaches approximately 750,000 homes in Arizona.

---

#### Moose Jaw Lifting Champ Adjusts

Dr. Monique Levesque-Hartle, a 1993 graduate of Northwestern College of Chiropractic, was selected to represent Canada at the Women's World Powerlifting Championships in Pinamar, Argentina in May. She was one of only two Canadian women to compete in the event.

Dr. Hartle competed in the 181-pound weight class. She successfully completed a squat of 325 pounds, a 198-pound bench press and a 325-pound deadlift for a total of 848 pounds, good for fifth place in the competition and nearly 100 pounds better than her total in last year's competition.

Although she did not win a medal at the championships, Dr. Hartle was proud to represent her country. "I was proud to wear the Team Canada," she said. "It is not every day you get to represent your country at a world event. It was a phenomenal experience to participate in a world-class competition. The caliber of the athletes was second to none, and the camaraderie between countries was astounding. It was an unforgettable experience."

Dr. Hartle's teammate, Kim Dennis, competed in the 132-pound weight class and finished ninth. Team Canada finished 14th out of 20 countries, their best placing in the last five years.

---

### Life Rugby Team Wins National Championship

For the first time in 18 years, Life University's rugby team can lay claim to the title of national champions. The Running Eagles accomplished this feat by defeating Aspen 43-21 in the Rugby League Super Match IV in San Diego, CA.

"Everyone had more-or-less taken it for granted that Aspen was going to win," said Life's head coach Mel Smith. "We were glad to be underdogs because it took some of the pressure off us, but it also gives you something more important to aim for. It was a great day for us."

The Rugby Super League is composed of the 16 best rugby teams in the United States. Life's team is 6-1 in Super League play, with their only loss coming in a 25-23 match against Boston Rugby Football Club in April.

JULY 2000