

"Contemporary Asian Healing" -- A Counterpoint

Kerwin Winkler

As the executive editor of the newly formatted and designed Journal of the American Chiropractic Association, I wanted to respond to Dr. John Amaro's editorial in the May 18, 1998 issue of Dynamic Chiropractic.

The first thing I would like the readers of Dynamic Chiropractic to know is the mission of the new JACA. As explained by managing editor Dana Murphy in an essay in the May issue of JACA, that mission is "to produce the most intelligent and informative chiropractic publication in the United States."

In making that statement, the editors of JACA simultaneously acknowledge the fact that any serial publication (like JACA) represents a steadily-growing accumulation of facts and ideas on each of the subjects it covers. And this is especially true of any publication whose content is scientific. Thus, Ms. Murphy's essay on JACA's mission adds:

"One guiding principle for those of us who work on the Journal is that any good journal is an ongoing task -- a work in progress. With each issue, we report everything germane we can gather, given the time constraints of journal production, on the topics we cover. But we go to press with each issue knowing that we can never be encyclopedic in our coverage of every topic, nor give proper mention of every doctor of chiropractic who has done notable work on each subject covered in that issue."

This statement most certainly pertains to the coverage of acupuncture in our March issue. Our intent had been to cover acupuncture in the widest possible context. The specific stimulus for focusing on acupuncture had been the November 1997 Consensus Development Conference at the National Institutes of Health. This event marked the first time ever that a major scientific conference validated the efficacy of acupuncture, based on a comprehensive review of what had become a critical mass of rigorous research. It helps all non-MD health care providers when NIH takes an interest in any alternative medicine. This conference, and its conclusions, made front-page news in all the major newspapers throughout the United States.

Doctors of chiropractic are no longer isolated from the rest of the health care community; they have become major players within that community. Therefore, the editors of JACA believe it is important to present information on developments -- within alternative care and allopathic medicine -- that will keep chiropractic physicians up to date in many areas. Coverage of any one topic does not mean that we endorse or condemn it -- only that we believe it is important for our readers to know about it.

In this regard, we were therefore particularly pleased and honored when one of the key presenters at the NIH conference on acupuncture, Dr. Lixing Lao, PhD, LAc, accepted our offer to be interviewed for the introductory section of our coverage on acupuncture. The other sections of this coverage were written, quite appropriately, by and for doctors of chiropractic.

In no way, as our mission statement underscores, was this March issue coverage of acupuncture

meant to be the final, last or complete word on the emerging and evolving role of acupuncture within U.S. health care, much less on our doctors' involvement with acupuncture. Please note that all of the sections on acupuncture, except for the interview with the NIH presenter Dr. Lao, were written by chiropractors.

Whenever there are notable new developments on acupuncture, or the relationship between acupuncture and chiropractic, we will visit acupuncture once again, and we will gather all that falls within our purview -- that is both informative and useful for the DCs in the field -- in the publication of JACA.

Because we consider each issue of our Journal as a "work in progress," we hope that in the future those who have objections to what we have printed will speak directly to us -- not just to the readers of alternative publications such as Dynamic Chiropractic.

We are not afraid of criticism; we learn from it, and also consider any comments and corrections sent to us as the next element in the ongoing dialogue we very much hope to foster within the pages of our Journal. In fact, if you look at the May issue of JACA, you will find several letters from doctors of chiropractic who had diverse comments -- both pro and con -- on our coverage of acupuncture.

There are many schools of both philosophy and technique within chiropractic. Like the ACA that publishes it, we are striving to make JACA the broadest possible tent -- a place where those who support different philosophies and techniques can make their case with intelligence and sound supporting evidence. On this basis, we invite Dr. Amaro to submit to JACA an article distilling his thoughts on acupuncture. While no editor can ever guarantee publication, we will make every effort to try and include his piece in a forthcoming issue of JACA.

Our approach to publishing was recently validated when we won the top prize, a gold award, from the Society of National Association Publishers. In a letter announcing the award, the Society noted:

"We would like to congratulate you and your staff for the standard of excellence your team of professionals has achieved."

We firmly believe that we are on the right path toward producing a journal in which the entire chiropractic profession can take pride. We only ask that you join with us in submitting to JACA articles on the full diversity of topics that are of vital concern to the modern doctor of chiropractic.

Finally, on a personal note, I must add that it is my firm conviction that no profession ever advances its cause by resorting to the highly-loaded word "conspiracy." If the chiropractic profession wishes to be taken seriously as a respected member of today's health care team, that kind of verbiage, and the extreme sort of thought process that it inevitably represents, must from this point forward be anathema.

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