

Nutrition - Is It Chiropractic?

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People learn about chiropractic through many different encounters. Some people may read about chiropractic in a magazine, while others may be referred by their MD who explains about "manipulation" as part of the referral. Others hear their friends or family talk about the wonderful care and being "adjusted." People also learn about chiropractic on the Internet.

A few of us learned about chiropractic as children. No, our experiences didn't necessarily follow specific chiropractic position papers: it was the philosophy of health that went by the name "chiropractic." My father didn't ask us to read a book about chiropractic, but we lived it each and every day.

My father was the caregiver. I never saw another health care provider except for stitches (what would you expect in a family with three boys?). I never realized how much I knew about chiropractic and health care until my father died and (for the first time in almost 35 years) I had to choose a new chiropractor for my health care needs.

A significant element of our family's health care has and always will include nutrition. We all take daily supplements and modify those as needed (i.e., fighting colds and flu with extra doses of vitamin C, etc.). As long as I can remember, this has been a part of what I understood chiropractic to be.

I can still remember the irony when the first study was released associating some benefit to vitamin C in fighting colds. Our family had used this for decades at a time when everyone said it had no benefit. We had demonstrated through years of individual cases that "it works."

People today are interested in nutrition as an aspect of maintaining good health. They've read or heard the many anecdotal cases in the popular media citing the problems associated with vitamin deficiency. The public is reading the labels and giving greater consideration to the content of their food. People are much more willing these days to recognize the value of vitamin supplements.

This may not be a part of your practice. You may not want to become a "vitamin sales person." But be assured, that a certain significant percentage of your patients are aware and involved in their own nutrition. They are looking to you for information, even if they don't ask.

The chiropractic profession has watched vitamin stores spring-up across the country, followed by the institutionalization of the daily vitamin. Suddenly, the \$5 per hour clerk at the local GNC is providing nutritional information.

Where is chiropractic?

Have we accepted relegation to low back?

What percentage of the population has passed us by because they didn't recognize their local chiropractor as being knowledgeable about nutrition?

Don't blow this out of proportion. This is not to say that DCs should be nothing more than vitamin hustlers. Likewise, if nutrition exceeds your state's scope of practice, this is merely an academic discussion. But there is a wisdom in emphasizing the many aspects of chiropractic practice, particularly in order to satisfy current interests of society.

We have spent over 100 years telling the public that health care is more than just drugs and surgery. Now that much of the population has responded, we need to be equipped to serve them in their quest for health.

Is nutrition an aspect of your chiropractic practice?

If not, why not?

If so, are you looking after the nutritional needs of each patient or waiting for them to ask you?

With the exception of stitches and my time in the Navy, I have only seen an MD twice in over 40 years (three times if you include my birth). For me, this is the glory of chiropractic.

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