

PTs & DCs Bail Out of Orthopractic

NACM AND MCKENZIE INSTITUTE WITHDRAW

Editorial Staff

As can happen with organizations lacking a firm foundation, the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International appears to be falling apart. Two of the primary supporting organization have withdrawn their support, leaving a handful of MDs and a few independent PTs as the only "orthopractors" left.

The first organization to pull out was the National Association of Chiropractic Medicine (NACM). In a memo faxed to members November 28, 1994, Ron Slaughter, MSc, DC, pronounced:

"I have personally contacted Dr. Katz and informed him that we will NOT, at this time, be recommending our membership to jointly renew their membership in OSI (Canada)."

Dr. Slaughter is the chairman of the board of the NACM and the national executive director of the Orthopractic Manipulation Society (USA), a splinter group from the original. According to the memo, Dr. Slaughter intends to create an 18-month educational program that will allow chiropractors to become orthopractors. While the membership numbers for both organizations are not public information, they are estimated to be less than a hundred.

On January 9, 1995, Robin McKenzie, OBE, FCSP, FNZSP (Hon), Dip MT, of the McKenzie Institute, withdrew his support of the Orthopractic Society. In his letter, Mr. McKenzie stated: "In view of developments in the past few months, the McKenzie Institute International can no longer support the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International." Mr. McKenzie asked Dynamic Chiropractic to publish his letter to Dr. Katz.

In an exclusive follow-up interview Mr. McKenzie added:

"Dr. Katz has, by the very way he is handling all this, shown that it is really turning into a witch-hunt against chiropractic. He has been claiming support which really hasn't been there. He has even claimed that the 20,000 members that have been through the McKenzie Institute are supporting orthopractic. I found that very disconcerting and it wasn't correct."

In the July 29, 1993 interview in "DC" with Murray Katz, MD, incorporator and sole director of the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International (OMSI), Dr. Katz stated: "We have been officially endorsed by the McKenzie Institute International, which has over 20,000 members." This is apparently the comment Mr. McKenzie is referring to.

The loss of these two organizations has to be devastating. With most of the major support withdrawn, it remains to be seen whether Katz's orthopractic organization is anything but a one-man show.

Robin McKenzie's letter to Dr. Katz is printed in full below:

9 January 1995
Dr. Murray Katz
Orthopractic Manipulation Society International
P.O. Box 145
Beaconsfield, Quebec
CANADA H9W 527

Dear Dr. Katz,

I regret to inform you of my decision to withdraw my personal endorsement of the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International, as well as (to withdraw) my personal endorsement to members of the McKenzie Institute worldwide to support your organisation.

As I initially feared, it appears that the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International's conduct has been that of a conduit for a witch-hunt against chiropractic, to the point that potentially higher purposes have been obscured.

It has always been the goal of the McKenzie Institute International to encourage a rational approach to mechanical diagnosis and treatment of spinal disorders. In this regard, it is no secret that I have been critical of chiropractors who overtreat or treat according to specious criteria. However, I have not restricted my focus in this regard to the chiropractic profession as there are many abuses and shortcomings in the treatment of spinal disorders that are amenable to mechanical therapies within the physical therapy and medical professions. It must never be forgotten that chiropractors and osteopaths were the only ones, for quite some time, dispensing mechanical therapies for conditions amenable only to mechanical intervention.

It is my belief that energy is best spent building bridges instead of digging trenches. The McKenzie Institute over the years has developed an interdisciplinary approach. Hundreds of chiropractors have taken part in our educational programme. Although in the past I may have been considered one of the bulwarks of physiotherapy against the chiropractic profession, I have come to realise that it is the intentional design of the individual health care practitioner and not their professional designation or title that is of the most importance.

The McKenzie Institute International's goals include the promotion of a rational scientific approach to mechanical diagnosis and treatment of spinal disorders. This includes exercise, mobilisation, manipulation and education in body mechanics. It is my impression that promoting an interdisciplinary rational approach utilising these tools will benefit the public more than a vitriolic vendetta that can only serve to confuse such purposes.

The McKenzie Institute International's representative to the United States Orthopractic Manipulation Society International's meetings was Gary Jacob, DC, our chiropractic consultant. It was both the hopes of myself and Dr. Jacob that much of the initial information that we were receiving about the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International was just "bad press," and that, in fact, the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International would share similar goals with the McKenzie Institute International concerning the promotion of positive interdisciplinary goals. While Dr. Jacob and I are chagrined by what is often associated with manipulative therapists of various professions, we feel that the sights of the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International has been set on destroying chiropractic targets, as opposed to envisioning interdisciplinary solutions consistent with the goals of the McKenzie Institute International.

We have come to the realisation that an association with the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International is inconsistent with our goals which are essentially apolitical and are designed to reinforce and hold up the best rational approach to mechanical diagnosis and therapy of spinal conditions in all professions, each of which has their own unfortunate spurious approaches to spinal care. Currently, we feel that the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International is not serving the purpose we originally hoped that it would have, i.e., an interdisciplinary means by which to identify health care professionals who ascribe to a rational approach, etc.

As the Orthopractic Manipulation Society International appears to have goals that may obstruct this purpose, I must currently withdraw my support.

Yours sincerely,

Robin McKenzie, OBE, FCSP, FNZSP (Hon), Dip MT
Waikanae, New Zealand

