

Pediatrics -- The Final Frontier

Donald M. Petersen Jr., BS, HCD(hc), FICC(h), Publisher

After reading the final part of DC's exclusive interview with Dr. Murray Katz on "orthopractic" (please see front page article in this issue), one can't help but recognize his underlying agenda. This is one of the values of a long interview. The interview was about three times longer than any we've printed in the history of this publication.

Dr. Katz makes his intentions plain with these comments:

"I happen to be in the forefront because of the issue of children, and that is going to become even more of an issue because the general chiropractic community has to appreciate that when they began to get heavily involved with children, and seminars, and claiming to treat all types of things with children, they provoked a very raw nerve within the medical community, which united the medical/scientific community in a way that they've never been united before.

"You don't appreciate the impact upon the medical community when the chiropractors started this aggressive tactic five or six years ago of promoting chiropractic pediatrics. It caused a reaction within the pediatric medical community which I think has really done the entire chiropractic profession a tremendous disservice, a tremendous disservice for all of their political goals. And it sparked the initiation of the Orthopractic Society."

So why is chiropractic pediatrics such a big issue?

What is the medical community so concerned about?

These questions are not just rhetorical. Not only am I a strong advocate for chiropractic, I'm also the proud father of two sons. I know what it's like to see my son's breathing shortened by asthma. I understand the anguish of wondering if we will have to resort to drugs that will help him breathe now, but weaken his lungs in the process. There are no stronger emotions than what parents feel for their children when their health is threatened.

Thank God I also know what it is to see my son's asthma subside after chiropractic adjustments. How wonderful it is to know I have a safe alternative.

Quite frankly, as a parent, I don't care that this profession is just beginning to conduct the necessary research into the chiropractic treatment of asthma. Every parent with a child that benefits from chiropractic care feels the same way: little matters beyond the health of their child.

So what is this "very raw nerve" that Dr. Katz refers to?

Perhaps it is the realization that the medical community is losing its grip on family health. Perhaps Dr. Katz sees his position as the "medical director of the largest children's center in Canada" dwindling in the face of conservative pediatric care.

Yes, it will be a number of years before chiropractic research of asthma, otitis media, etc., is conducted. You can imagine just how expensive, complex and time consuming this type of research will be. It will require assessment technology that has yet to be developed.

No, this doesn't mean that we should discontinue treating children. Responsible care that doesn't place the patient at unnecessary risk is always appropriate. But the same emotions that cause a parent to rejoice when they see their child free from pain and/or symptoms are just as strong if there is any sense that their child is not treated with the utmost care and concern.

Yes, the medical/pediatric community will continue to feel threatened. Led by Dr. Katz and joined by other MDs -- and a few misguided DCs -- the usual attacks will come in waves until conclusive research is conducted. It seems to be part of the credibility process (litigating, launching media campaigns, etc.) that chiropractic has always had to fight its way through.

The rule-of-thumb for chiropractic pediatrics is simple:

Chiropractors should only treat those people who have spines.

DMP, Jr., BS, HCD(hc)

SEPTEMBER 1994