

Introducing Chiropractic to Northwest Africa

ON THE ROAD TO MOROCCO WITH SIDI LEMNOUNI, DC

Steve Kelly, managing editor

Dr. Lemnoui came to the United States from Morocco in his early 20s to study aviation management. He came to chiropractic, like so many chiropractors, because of the healing powers of chiropractic. In his case, a fall from a horse resulted in back problems that did not abate until he sought chiropractic care.

After receiving his BS in aviation management, his career aspirations flew in another direction -- to Life College of Chiropractic -- where he earned his degree in 1979.

This summer, Dr. Lemnoui left his Flagler Beach, Florida practice for the environs of his youth: not just a sentimental visit, but to introduce to his native land what he'd learned in his travels. He brought chiropractic with him.

Morocco -- it brings to mind images of the great Sahara desert, and exotic ports of call -- Casablanca, Tangier, Rabat, Agadir. And while Marrakech may be as foreign to you as the French Foreign Legion, chiropractic is equally foreign to Moroccans. Yet the positive reception that Dr. Lemnoui received, and the interest in chiropractic shown by the Moroccan medical physicians he spoke to and worked with, is an encouraging sign.

Dr. Lemnoui said the highlight of his trip was working with Mounir El-Malki, MD, a rhumatologist. Dr. El-Malki invited Dr. Lemnoui to provide his patients with chiropractic care, which Dr. Lemnoui did for three weeks. "Dr. El-Malki was very pleased with the results," said Dr. Lemnoui, "and asked if there is a possibility I might be able to come back every three months for 10 days to handle the demand for chiropractic care."

Dr. Lemnoui was invited by Dr. El-Malki to demonstrate chiropractic at the local hospital. Later, Dr. Lemnoui spoke at a convention for physical therapists, treated athletes in the capital city of Rabat, and presented a five-hour talk and demonstration to MDs of the Moroccan Ministry of Sports Medicine. The sports medicine MDs were very interested in learning about the benefits of chiropractic for athletes.

After meeting with a number of world-class athletes in Morocco, including Said Aouita, 1984 Olympic champion in the 5000 meters, the Moroccan Olympic Medical Staff informed Dr. Lemnoui that they were interested in coming to the United States to learn more about chiropractic. Also, as a result of this meeting, Dr. Lemnoui was invited to be the chiropractor for the Moroccan squad at the 1994 Soccer Cup Games in Orlando, Florida, and for the Moroccan Olympic team in 1996.

Dr. Lemnoui met with the Moroccan Ministry of Health and spoke at length with Dr. Essolbi, chief of the hospitals in Morocco, and Dr. Kabbaj, an orthopedist who is chief of orthopedics and rehabilitation of the Moroccan Medical Association. "They advised me that the representatives of Morocco are very interested in having a chiropractic convention held in the city of Marrakech, where a new hotel capable of handling up to 3,000 guests has just been completed," Dr. Lemnoui

related. "These accommodations would enable the entire medical community to attend the convention and learn first hand what chiropractic is," he concluded.

According to Dr. Lemnoui, Drs. Kabbaj and Essolbi of the Ministry of Health told him that if a chiropractic convention of 100 or more DCs came to Marrakech, that the convention "... would be held under the auspices of His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco." Under this scenario, Drs. Kabbaj and Essolbi told Dr. Lemnoui, full television coverage would ensue, and the potential for the government to authorize chiropractic as part of the country's primary health care.

"I have all the contacts and information available to anyone who is interested in helping introduce chiropractic to Morocco on a large scale," Dr. Lemnoui told "DC."

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Editor's note: While we congratulate Dr. Lemnoui on his good work in Morocco, we spoke to him about the importance of working with the World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC) to further chiropractic in that country. The WFC represents chiropractic interests in over 40 countries. While individual chiropractors may have some success in introducing chiropractic to areas of the world where it is unknown, negotiations with foreign governments concerning health care matters is clearly a matter of international diplomacy, and is best approached under the auspices of the WFC, the only viable international chiropractic association.

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