

## Nat'l Institutes of Health Awards Fellowship to DC

GRANT IS FIRST OF ITS KIND FOR CHIROPRACTIC

Steve Kelly, managing editor

The vexation of chiropractic research has been gaining access to the federal dollars available through various government agencies, e.g., the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). (See "Federal Funding for Chiropractic Research Sought" in the Sept. 1, 1992 issue of Dynamic Chiropractic.)

On June 5, 1992, a day to be noted on the Chiropractic Historical Calendar, Dr. Khalsa received notification that his application for the National Research Service Award for postdoctoral fellows, given by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), had been approved.

"This award, explained Dr. Khalsa, "is notable in that it is the first time that the NIH have ever made a grant of this type to a chiropractor."

The award was at the highest level of support possible for the grant: \$105,900, paid in annual stipends of \$35,300 over three years. The amount of the grant is significant because the NIH normally base their level of grant support on the applicants years of postdoctorate training. When it came time to evaluate support criteria in his case, Dr. Khalsa said his clinical experience was deemed "analogous to postdoctoral research."

"It (the high level of grant support) implicitly acknowledges that the D.C. degree is analogous to a Ph.D., M.D., D.D.S. degree for base research experience," asserted Dr. Khalsa. "Further, it recognizes our clinical experience as relevant to a research program for identifying support parameters."

Dr. Khalsa's research, in broad descriptive terms, will focus on neurophysiology and soft tissue biomechanics.

### The Road to Fellowship

The events leading up to the research grant began almost three years ago when Dr. Khalsa began a master's program in biomedical engineering at Boston University. The program required a thesis based on original research.

"My research," Dr. Khalsa explained, "investigated fundamental properties of articular cartilage to further our understanding of how and why cartilage responds as it does to stress, strain, and other external environmental conditions. Material properties were discovered and a mathematical relationship was developed to help model articular cartilage."

In the Fall of 1991, Dr. Khalsa met Peter Grigg, Ph.D., a senior researcher at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) who was presenting a seminar on his research on soft tissue biomechanics and neurophysiology. Dr. Grigg offered to do a Ph.D. program in soft tissue biomechanics with Dr. Khalsa.

"Dr. Grigg graciously offered to support my research at UMMS, and encourage and assisted me in applying for the NIH National Research Service Award.

Dr. Khalsa feels that without his prior training at Boston University, the support and recommendations of its faculty, and the "unqualified support of Dr. Grigg," that he would not have received the award.

Chiropractic has broken unfurrowed ground at the NIH. It's an auspicious beginning, albeit long overdue, for chiropractic to begin to get a share of the federal research dollars that have been the domain of medicine. It's a glimmer of the expanding role of research in chiropractic and revelatory of a new respect and acknowledgement for chiropractic and chiropractic researchers.

Editor's Note:

Dr. Khalsa received his B.S. in biology from LACC in 1979 and his D.C. a year later. In 1992, he obtained a M.S. in biomedical engineering from Boston University, and is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Dr. Khalsa is past president of the Boston Chiropractic Society (1984-86), a member of the Massachusetts Chiropractic Society, and of the ACA and its Council on Orthopedics.

In addition to the NIH fellowship, Dr. Khalsa has received fellowships from the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research (FCER) 1989-91, 1992; Dept. of Biomedical Engineering, Boston University; and the Dept. of Physiology, University of Mass. Medical School.

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