

Chiropractic Sports Medicine and the Community

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Recently, there has been a heightened awareness of chiropractic's role in sports medicine. This has been helped by the media and the athletes that once again demand and appreciate chiropractic care. As this continues, it will trickle down to the public and continue to keep chiropractic care in the mainstream of peoples' consciousness. Never before has there been such a demand by so many athletes, sports, and teams for chiropractic inclusion. By no means am I satisfied with our progress to date, as I am still aware of many situations where chiropractors are not welcomed as part of the sports medicine team.

I believe that there are reasons for our successes and reasons for the lack of successes. Successes have been paved by the work and dedication of many DCs who have persisted and continued with their message and skill in providing the appropriate care to athletes. Many of these practitioners have clearly kept the chiropractic profession as the benefactor of their feats. DCs continue to maintain higher standards of education and knowledge in sports medicine/sports injuries. This has also impressed those around him/her and helped in their acceptance by the established sports medicine practitioner. Besides these individual accomplishments, there are accomplishments by the profession as a whole when it is represented by national and international sports organizations.

Our lack of acceptance can be characterized by the continued misunderstanding of how valuable we are to the athlete on many levels and by the unfortunate continued suppression and restrictions by the established sports medicine community that consists primarily of MDs and trainers. There also have been the DC inroads at various levels of organized sports but have kept it to themselves, or made everyone around him/her think it was them, not chiropractic, that was responsible for any of the successes. This philosophy, which has been around for many years has also minimized our ability to make greater gains in the athletic/sports medicine community. When these individual accomplishments occur, then few benefit instead of many, as few ever hear about it, and few learn from it. Thus, many DCs around the country and the world are always starting from scratch instead of being able to ride the success wave of those before them.

That is slowly changing as the visibility of the national and international organizations continue, many more DCs benefit by the few who are able to make significant inroads in the athletic community. This type of responsibility will allow us to accomplish more for chiropractic in the next ten years than what happened in the first eighty, as it relates to the role of chiropractors being recognized and put on sports medicine teams at all levels of competition.

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