

Toronto Star Highlights Chiropractic

Editorial Staff

The May 29, 2009 edition of the *Toronto Star* featured a "Special Report on Chiropractors" that presented almost a full tabloid page of information. Positively titled "Back to the Future" - in stark contrast to many other media accounts of chiropractic in recent years, including the March 2009 [ABC Nightline expose](#) on chiropractic, "Crack: Kids Head to the Chiropractor" - the article examines chiropractic in "academic research and collaborative practice" and paints a positive picture of the profession and its role in present and future health care. What's more, there's none of the "chiropractic may be dangerous" or "more research is needed" commentary/slant often seen in media pieces on chiropractic care (such as the Nightline report).

The article focuses on three well-known doctors of chiropractic in the greater Toronto area, all three of whom have made substantial inroads into mainstream health care circles. The first chiropractor mentioned is Dr. Greg Kawchuk, who the article makes clear is "a chiropractor with a Ph.D. in bio-engineering." Dr. Kawchuk is credited for his research "geared to finding a way to measure mechanical changes in the back and see how the spine changes in response to treatment." He points out that "when you look at back pain as a whole, no one has better science than anyone else. We're all in this together."



The article also mentions that Dr. Kawchuk holds a [research chair position](#) at the University of Alberta. [As reported in *DC* in 2001, Dr. Kawchuk received Canada's [first research chair](#) at the University of Calgary. Three years later, he received a second chair position at the University of Alberta. The Canadian federal government established the \$900 million research chair program in 2000, designed to make Canada among the top five countries in the world in terms of research and development. Dr. Kawchuk's appointment to the University of Calgary was in accordance with guidelines established by the [Canadian Chiropractic Association](#) (CCA), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Canadian Chiropractic Research Foundation (CCRF), and the [Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research](#) (FCER).]

The second DC featured in the *Toronto Star* article is Dr. Mark Erwin, who also has a PhD and holds a research chair position. (Dr. Erwin was the second chiropractor so honored, receiving [the second research chair](#) - at the University of Toronto - in 2001.) His research is in "the biology of spinal discs." Dr. Erwin also assists with intake assessment of potential neurosurgery patients at Toronto Western Hospital. He is quick to note that "(m)any patients referred to the clinic don't need surgery." In the article, Dr. Erwin also notes that "(h)aving a chiropractor available in hospital to 'triage' patients is probably a good idea."

The last DC featured is Dr. Deborah Kopansky-Giles, an associate professor at [Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College](#) (CMCC). Dr. Kopansky-Giles helped establish a collaborative program at [St. Michael's Hospital](#) in Toronto and, as the article mentions, was one of the first DCs to hold a hospital staff position. One of her patients, Connie Camilleri, who is a nurse at the hospital, was

very enthusiastic in her comments:

"There's been some bad publicity about chiropractic, particularly around neck adjustments and a slight risk of stroke that happens in isolated cases. But the benefits far outweigh the risks. Absolutely, I recommend chiropractic to other people. It's actually a shame that more people don't use it, especially in conjunction with massage therapy."

The article also features two sidebars. The first includes statements from the [Ontario Chiropractic Association's](#) public education program. The second provides important statistics about the number of DCs in Ontario, the need for chiropractic to be reinstated into OHIP funding, and particulars regarding chiropractic education at CMCC.

All in all, the article says much about the promise of chiropractic and nothing to slam or denigrate the profession. In fact, the closest thing to a negative statement may be the tongue-in-cheek sentence author Judy Gerstel begins the article with: "Some of the things chiropractors are doing behind our backs these days may surprise you." An attempt to create shock value, perhaps, but considering the remainder of the article is highly positive, and compared to what the profession has endured over the years in terms of sharply negative media coverage, not bad at all.

To read the *Toronto Star* article in its entirety, go to www.thestar.com/article/642057. Note that the Web version of the May 29 print article has been retitled "Back Future," erroneously or by design.

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