

## Research That Focuses on the Family

Claudia Anrig, DC

With prenatal, pediatric, and family wellness care growing worldwide, a specific journal that focuses on these topics is timely. This interview with Dr. Matt McCoy, editor of the *Journal of Pediatric, Maternal and Family Health*, provides insight into this new endeavor.

Q: You come from a long history of being involved with research. What made you decide to branch off into pediatrics and prenatal?

A: I originally got interested in research while I was a student after getting frustrated at the subluxation bashing I saw going on within the profession, and realized I had to find out for myself what the truth was. When I got into practice, research became even more important to me as I used it to battle insurance companies, IME doctors and attorneys. Then I began getting more actively involved in doing research as well as the publication of research. This was a natural outgrowth.

Then a few years ago, Blue Cross/Blue Shield issued its infamous policy that chiropractic for children is experimental and investigational. Everyone in the profession was furious, as was I. After my emotions settled I decided to take an objective look at the evidence; after two years of digging into the literature, I was able to gather all of the research ever published on chiropractic and children - it didn't even fill a copy paper box.

I was really affected by this and realized that the profession had failed the very children it said it was most concerned about. Long story short, that's how the new journal came about.

Q: What do you wish to accomplish with the *Journal of Pediatric, Maternal and Family Health (JPMFH)*?

A: I hope to accomplish more of what we already have. In the first year alone, we published about two dozen research articles. If we can do that and more each year, we can begin to build the literature base for pediatrics and prenatal care. This is very important when it comes to standards of care, best practices and health reform.

Q: What are some of the challenges you will need to meet to accomplish this goal?

A: Our profession as a whole does not value research. It is a serious cultural problem within the profession. Those of us on the more conservative, subluxation end of the spectrum have often been attacked by researchers in the profession who support a more musculoskeletal model and use research against us. This has made matters worse, as the conservative faction of the profession mistrust research even more as a result. They have to let this go and embrace those of us who are doing research that supports the fundamental tenets of the profession.

Q: Do you see chiropractic research ever defining wellness and preventative care for families?

A: I don't know. If we can overcome these cultural issues and the disdain for research, we might have a chance. If we don't lead the field, there are a host of other providers who have already

stepped in to provide this. The technical means to provide the necessary data exist - that is no longer an excuse. We have the technical ability to gather large amounts of data through ongoing longitudinal outcomes studies and use advanced statistical methods to analyze that data. But until we reach enough of a cultural shift, there will be no support for such studies.

One thing is for sure - I can think of no better place to start in the effort to educate the masses on the value of chiropractic than children and their mothers.

Q: If you could envision where chiropractic will be in 20 years, what do you see?

A: It is my contention that the chiropractic profession has about 20 years to turn itself around and refocus itself based on its foundational principles. There is no better place to start right now than with the children who will be in their 20s by that time. This is going to require a major research effort, aggressive political involvement and aggressive marketing. We need to move beyond the 5 percent to 10 percent of early adopters who have historically gone to chiropractors, and to do that we need to provide evidence beyond neck pain, back pain and headaches.

If all goes the way I hope it does, the profession will honor its stewardship of the profession and take on the ethical and moral responsibility it has to produce the evidence for its claims. If we do that, the public will want our services whether or not it's included by the government or some insurance company.

Q: How do you see the *JPMFH* helping to achieve that vision; what role will it play?

A: It serves as a seed for the individual, family chiropractor to see that there really is research to support what they do day in and day out. It also serves as an outlet for researchers and authors who want to have their work published but who, due to the entrenched bias in the research arm of the profession toward musculoskeletal disorders, can't find a home for their work. Practitioners and researchers need to provide the research; we will review it and publish it and then that research will be used one study at a time to stack the bricks in the building of our evidence that supports our day-to-day practice. I don't know how tall that building will get in 20 years, but I know without the venue we won't have much at all.

Q: What role do you see the *JPMFH* playing in bridging the gap between chiropractic and other holistic and allopathic professions?

A: I think it shows them that we value objectivity and evidence, but we don't deny our fundamental principles based on innate intelligence, vitalism, and the role that vertebral subluxation plays in the preservation and maintenance of health in these special populations. This is our message as a profession - we really don't have anything else unique anymore.

Q: What would you consider some of your most interesting papers published in the past year?

A: My favorite paper we have published is Dr. Elster's clinical study of infants with colic. It's my favorite not because of the topic or because it's a subluxation-based upper cervical study, or because it involves infants; but because it shows what any practicing chiropractor can do right in his or her office with the patients coming in and out every day. This is where the change is going to occur in this profession - on the front lines by chiropractors committed to making the paradigm shift. Practicing chiropractors have the data that every researcher wants and needs - especially our brand of chiropractic.

Q: What legacy would you like to leave our profession?

A: I want our profession to embrace its stewardship of the sacred trust we were given by the founders. As I look around today and see the direction the entrenched powers are taking the profession and the incorporation of more and more allopathic methods while allopathy is abandoning them, I can't help but wonder what went wrong.

When I'm done, I hope to have played a part in the transformation of chiropractic back to its roots and then its thrust into the future as a leader in health reform based on its commitment to helping families achieve health and happiness.

This new journal will be an important contribution to chiropractic for those who practice family care. If you would like to know more about the *Journal of Pediatric, Maternal and Family Health*, visit [www.chiropracticpediatricresearch.net](http://www.chiropracticpediatricresearch.net).

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