

Perspectives: Integrating Traditional Chiropractic With 21st Century Public Health

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The discipline of public health encompasses a wide spectrum of health care professions, interest groups and organizations. The common tie that binds these parties under the auspice of public health is prevention of disease and improvement of society's overall health. As we progress through the 21st century, chiropractic continues to enjoy an ever-loftier position in health care. From its inception in 1895, chiropractic focused on prevention and the correction of disease (or *dis-ease*, per B.J. Palmer) through the detection and correction of the vertebral subluxation complex. Chiropractic students were traditionally taught *ab initio* ["from the beginning"] about the three fundamental causes of subluxation: traumas, toxins and thoughts (i.e., auto-suggestions). These three basic, but powerful seeds of subluxation and dis-ease can be lost as students move through a rigorous curriculum and successful career, and consequently chiropractors may find it difficult to associate those real-world scenarios that may lead to subluxation.

Recognizing that health is more than the absence of disease is critical. That is a basic tenet of public health according to the WHO definition. So-called "health care" is nothing more than symptom-controlled sick care. It is not that chiropractic is an "alternative" solution to this sinking allopathic model; rather, it is a lifestyle, one that the chiropractor must first embrace and then model for their patients.

Chiropractors cannot "unsubluxate" the masses when they themselves are subluxated. A subluxated doctor is a liability to society. Chiropractors must be free from nerve interference in order to connect the dots first set forth by the Palmers and now updated with the modern developments outlined below. D.D. Palmer was correct when he said that there are three T's that cause subluxation. Subluxation may not seem like a public health concern at first, but dis-ease, dysfunction and disease, all ultimately leading to cell death, are clearly public health problems. Understanding the root cause of subluxation provides today's chiropractor with a simple model patients and their community alike can comprehend.

The United States has experienced general economic decline since 2007, which has led to millions of jobs being lost, [many of which will never return](#).¹ With those jobs have gone much of the nation's optimism and in many ways, [its health](#).² Subluxations are creeping into Americans' lives like few other times in its history, often insidiously, through trauma, toxins and thoughts.

Trauma can be acute or repetitive. With Americans losing their jobs at a frequent rate, the ones who are left may have to do the job of several people. A manual laborer who was at one point prior to the economic decline responsible for one step on the assembly line, may now be placed in charge of several. This will lead not only to mental fatigue, but also to repetitive-stress injuries.³

This is a major public health concern because injured workers are more likely to visit their medical doctor and receive a myopic, short-term solution such as analgesic prescription medication. In 2011, accidental drug overdose from prescription medications exceeded motor-vehicle accidents

for the first time as the number-one accidental cause of death in the U.S., and "medical inefficiency" became the third leading cause of death overall.⁴ Additionally, when workers are using these prescriptions, they may be unable to perform as well on the job due to high rates of side effects, which increase with each additional prescription.

Another trauma found in the workplace is due to poor posture perpetuated by poor ergonomics. People were not created to sit at a desk all day working at a computer. The lack of posture coupled with a sedentary lifestyle is extremely detrimental to the overall structure and function of the body.

The economic downfall also has led to an increase in the price of food commodities. This steady rise has become evident in grocery stores across the U.S., and consumers are reacting to it by eating in restaurants more often. [Recent reports suggest](#) it is cheaper for an American family to eat out than to prepare food at home.⁵

Although this may appear true in the short term, the long-term health impacts far outweigh the convenience and frugality of dining out regularly. The majority of restaurants prepare their meals using less-than-optimal techniques and serve conventionally raised, genetically modified food low in bioavailable nutrients and riddled with unnecessary toxins, which is detrimental to public health.

These toxins, including growth hormones, pesticides and mercury, are a major public health concern; preventable chronic diseases are on the rise along with a tremendous increase in cancer rates throughout the country. Many of these diseases are linked to chronic inflammation, which causes pain, diabetes and autoimmune conditions. The buildup of chemical toxins was described by B.J. Palmer as a primary cause of subluxation, and we are seeing the results in the health of the populace.

Toxins are seeping into our food supply and poisoning the population. Mercury in our fish and fluoride in the water supply are examples of environmental neurotoxins. [Toxins are a huge risk](#) to public health on many levels.

The loss of jobs has led to home foreclosures, layoffs and pay cuts, along with skepticism and uncertainty about the future. People manifest their stress in different ways, some of them physical and others emotional. Negative thoughts, formed and perpetuated during times of stress, can play a major role in the body's biochemistry, creating a chronic sympathetic state. This can lead to hypertension, heart failure, migraine headaches, adrenal exhaustion and other preventable chronic conditions - epidemics that kill hundreds of thousands per year.

It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy - if you are constantly thinking about being sick, then you are in fact going to be sick. If you are thinking about health, you will manifest health. Research from experts such as Dr. Bruce Lipton proves that it is not our genes that make us sick, but our environment. If you are living in a constantly traumatic, toxic or negative environment, then genetic expression can be affected, resulting in subsequent disease. When free from these three causes of subluxation, then you may still have genetic markers, but it does not doom you to a life of disease and despair.

It is time for all chiropractors to connect these dots of subluxation and start teaching it to their patients. There is no need for shame when it comes to basic chiropractic principles or concepts - they still hold true today and are consonant with good public-health principles. Our society is subluxated, and the conditions may be slightly different now; however, the cause remains. Chiropractors must remain vigilant in these concepts in order to put in the right intention when delivering a specific spinal adjustment to correct subluxation.

In this time of mass consternation, chiropractors are needed to adjust the nation's resulting subluxations. Now more than ever, DCs have a responsibility to quell the subluxation epidemic. As the planet groans under the yoke of income disparity and austerity measures, we have the imperative to educate mankind in the care of the spine and central nervous system, and deliver the proper, specific, scientific chiropractic adjustment.

References

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