

The Bottom Line ... From a Surgeon Who Knows

Donald M. Petersen Jr., BS, HCD(hc), FICC(h), Publisher

Regardless of individual relationships between providers, there continues to be a type of Hatfield-McCoy feud between the philosophies of medicine and chiropractic, particularly when it comes to musculoskeletal ailments. Part of this is obviously an economic turf war and part has to do with the respective educations that establish the foundations for clinical practice.

That said, there are occasional breakthroughs, albeit rare. [An article](#) titled "Back Pain Cured! No Drugs ... No Surgery" appeared in the Oct. 15, 2014 issue of *Bottom Line/Personal*, a monthly newsletter that claims a "readership of nearly a million" and touts itself as "the most widely read consumer newsletter ever published." It contains information on everything from health to money management. The newsletter provides its readers with articles authored by experts in their respective fields.

What makes this article interesting is that it is written by spine neurosurgeon Jack Stern, MD, PhD, who is on the clinical faculty of Weil Cornell Medical College in New York City. Dr. Stern begins his article by telling readers:

"The ability to diagnose and treat the different types of back pain has improved tremendously over the years. A wide variety of conventional and complementary therapies has made this possible. The fortunate result is that the vast majority of patients *don't* need invasive procedures or powerful drugs."

He then proceeds to review several "therapies" including exercise, lumbar stabilization, acupuncture, Alexander technique and chiropractic. In each instance, the author provides a description of the therapy and "my advice."

While the other forms of care also enjoyed positive reviews, chiropractic came out shining the brightest. Dr. Stern begins the section on chiropractic by tackling the adversarial issues between the professions head-on: "Many conventional doctors view chiropractic as an unproven treatment or even fraudulent. But that's not true."

He goes on to note: "I've had a number of patients with herniated disks who reported significant improvement after getting chiropractic treatments. A randomized, double blinded study conducted last year found that back pain patients who were treated with chiropractic therapy in addition to standard medical care had less pain and better physical functioning than those who received standard care alone."

[Dr. Stern](#) adds a "bonus" paragraph to his review, stating that "people who see chiropractors tend to rate their care as very good or excellent." He concludes his remarks with the following: "My *advice*: Chiropractors are the frontline treaters of low back pain. They are knowledgeable, and a qualified chiropractor will know when your specific problem requires additional attention."

While nothing presented in Dr. Stern's article is news to you, it is likely news to the consumers reading it. This is probably the first time they have heard a spine surgeon laud the benefits of chiropractic care. And for the next month or so, this information will be shared at beauty parlors

and youth sporting events across the country.

The point is, the opinions and attitudes of medical providers and consumers *are* changing. As people read the research and enjoy positive experiences with chiropractic, they learn about the benefits. This is where the change begins.

Ultimately, they will seek your care. This is when you become a chiropractic ambassador. Often, you are the first experience people have with chiropractic and the one "chosen" to make a great first impression. The way you educate your new patients can greatly support the information that brought them into your office in the first place.

Read more findings on my blog: <http://blog.toyourhealth.com/wrblog/>. You can also visit me on [Facebook](#).

DECEMBER 2014