

We Get Letters & E-Mail

Wake Up!

Dear Editor:

I recently attended a graduation for physical therapists who had just finished a three-year schooling program and were receiving a "doctorate of physical therapy." During the commencement, they were told they were "pioneers," as this was apparently the first graduating class for the doctorate. The commencement speaker just happened to be a professor who taught "manipulation."

Although I have heard the physical therapists were attempting to broaden their scope. I felt I should write and inform you. It is becoming more apparent that doctors of chiropractic should unite to form a larger voice. I hope this is a wake-up call for more DCs to join state and national associations.

*Paul E. Okamoto, DC
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Match That, Medicine!

Dear Editor:

A May 13 *San Francisco Chronicle* article proclaimed, "Spinal manipulations commonly done by chiropractors to treat painful or stiff necks carry a risk of tearing an artery and causing a stroke, a study has found." Buried deep in the same article are other provocative quotes:

"By one estimate, only 2.6 of every 100,000 strokes are caused by a cervical artery dissection." Try to visualize how small that is. Less than 3 one-hundredths of 1 percent of all strokes - and only a fraction of those may be chiropractic-related.

"The chiropractor is falsely implicated in a lot of cases,' one U. Cal. S.F. researcher said."

"Stroke complications are exceedingly rare,' said Dr. Hector R. Oksenendler, a Walnut Creek chiropractor. 'I've been in practice 30 years and never saw one.'" Think about it: 30 years! How many of you have ever had a stroke follow your adjustment? You have probably never seen one, either - with millions of adjustments for neck pain; headaches; migraines; deafness; stomach problems; allergies; asthma; carpal tunnel syndrome - with wonderful results.

Medical editors/commentators in the same issue of *Neurology* that originally published this study said, "The small risk of dissection and stroke outweighs the [teenie-weenie] benefit of this treatment modality for patients with acute neck pain."

The *Chronicle* also quotes ACA spokesman Dr. Bill Lauretti, who rebuts some of the grosser errors

of the study. I know Bill personally and respect him highly, but my read on this matter differs from his: The researchers may be honest searchers after truth, but the PR is just one more barrage of misinformation in an ongoing turf war - shoddy scare tactics about an emotionally charged buzzword designed to frighten the public away from a superior service. There's more risk looking over your shoulder at a wasp than from a chiropractic adjustment.

With all due respect, chiropractic, at its worst, is safer than medicine at its best. The stats remain: only about one adjustment in between 4 and 16 million will cause a stroke. Match that, medicine! Match it, or remain silent when chiropractic is mentioned.

The highly publicized, first-in-a-century Canadian incident was not a dissected artery, and I don't believe the coroner was able to determine that it was caused by the adjustment at all. These duplicitous smear tactics will never end until chiropractors buckle under and deal drugs for the unprincipled pharmacosurgical corporations. So buckle now - or buck up, straighten up, and stay on purpose. The number of visits to MDs in the U.S. over the past 10 years has not changed, while visits to DCs and other "real doctors" have risen from 400 million to 600 million per year. The informed public is making its choice. It is time to look beyond adjusting millions and start changing the way we do things so billions can receive regular, life-giving spinal adjustments, get off drugs and keep their organs.

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