

We're Making Progress

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For the past year I have been a regular columnist for Dynamic Chiropractic. During that time, it has been my task to focus on various issues that are related to the role of the chiropractor in occupational health. If you have read my prior articles, you have probably deduced that I am of the opinion that we have a legitimate and necessary role in this field, particularly in the area of musculoskeletal injuries. In each of my articles I have attempted to develop a case for chiropractic in both the prevention and management of musculoskeletal injuries that are common in the workplace. I would like to use this issue of my column to illustrate some of the progress that we are making.

I recently had an opportunity to deliver a presentation at an ergonomics conference, ErgoCon '95, held in San Jose, California. It was sponsored by the Silicon Valley Ergonomics Institute, a branch of the ergonomics program at California State University, San Jose. First, I would like to offer my congratulations to the developers of ErgoCon '95. The multidisciplinary program was well organized and allowed individuals from a variety of areas to share ideas. This not only encourages a productive exchange of thoughts, it also fosters a greater understanding of the role each profession and specialty plays in preventing and managing musculoskeletal problems.

I was pleased to see the chiropractic profession so well represented. In addition to my presentation, there were three other chiropractic sessions:

- Dr. Kim Davis, a DC from Los Altos, delivered a presentation, "The Redwood City Project: Preventing Musculoskeletal Injuries." Dr. Davis described how she assisted the city in reducing the cost, frequency, and lost work time resulting from back injuries.
- Dr. T.J. Osborne, Dr. Robert Cook, and Anna Sturgeon described a stretching and exercise program they had implemented at a hospital in the Sunnyvale area. Drs. Osborne and Cook are both clinicians at Palmer West. Ms. Sturgeon is the marketing director for the Palmer West clinics.
- Dr. William Meeker, director of Research for Palmer West delivered the paper, "Factors Related to Acute Occupational Low Back Injuries." Dr. Meeker is a member of the advisory board of the Silicon Valley Ergonomics Institute and has recently been named director of research for both Palmer colleges.

Since this was a multidisciplinary conference, I was especially pleased to see such high quality presentations from each of the chiropractors present. We were obviously new to a number of individuals in the audience (i.e., ergonomists, human factors, human resources, etc.), and thanks to these very articulate and knowledgeable DCs, we put our best foot forward. The response to all of the chiropractic presentations was enthusiastic. Not once during the entire four days did I hear any

criticism or animosity towards the profession. Instead, my impression was we have made a great deal of progress in the last few years and are gradually becoming "mainstream" health care.

In addition to the presentations provided by chiropractors, there were other speakers who have a long affiliation with the chiropractic profession. Dr. Dennis Lindsey, a clinical psychologist and postgraduate faculty member of Los Angeles College of Chiropractic provided three presentations at the conference. Dr. David Thompson, an ergonomist and postgraduate faculty member of LACC, was a session coordinator.

Another recent event has provided me with further encouragement regarding the role of the chiropractor in occupational health and safety. I am writing this column from 35,000 feet as I return from a meeting held in conjunction with the centennial celebration in Washington, D.C. The meeting was co-sponsored by the World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). At the request of the WHO, the WFC has been asked to write a text describing the role of chiropractic in occupational health. Dr. J. Triano was appointed editor of the text and a planning meeting was held in London in May of 1993. The recent meeting in Washington was to discuss the first draft of the text. I must emphasize that the text is truly a cooperative effort between the chiropractic profession and the WHO. At every step throughout our discussions, the representatives from the WHO have insisted that the text must enable readers worldwide to appreciate the unique role of chiropractic in the area of industrial injuries. What a tremendous opportunity for chiropractic.

I am fortunate to have been asked to participate in this combined WFC/WHO project. I consider it to be both a tremendous honor and an exceptional opportunity to present the chiropractic profession in a favorable light to the world. Thanks to Dr. Triano, the WFC, and the WHO for initiating this project.

In closing, I would like to add some personal comments on the development of chiropractic on a worldwide scope. Those of us who practice chiropractic in the United States have come to expect certain rights and privileges. These rights and privileges have been gained through the dedication and efforts of many generations of DCs. During the WFC meeting in Washington it was emphasized that in many countries DCs are still fighting for the right to practice chiropractic. The battles for autonomy, credibility and respect that we have long waged are still being fought. It was suggested by chiropractors from around the world that the profession can no longer afford the internal discord and division that is so evident in the United States. It was stated, "It's time for the profession to get its act together!"

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SEPTEMBER 1995