

## NIH Grant to Geoffrey Bove, DC

### FED. RESEARCH AWARDS -- A DIFFICULT ROAD TRAVELED

Editorial Staff

Geoffrey Bove, DC, who has received support from the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research (FCER) the past three years as a research fellow, was awarded a grant from the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, a branch of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The award includes a research salary and an institutional allowance for three years.

Dr. Bove, a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill laboratory instructor in medical gross anatomy the past three years, gained notoriety recently for co-authoring "Family Physicians, Chiropractors and Back Pain" with Peter Curtis, MD, in the November 1992 Journal of Family Practice (see the March 26, 1993 issue of "DC"). The article details chiropractic's increasing role in primary care of musculoskeletal problems.

Dr. Bove, a PhD candidate in the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, received this National Research Service Award as a postdoctoral fellowship.

"My research project," explained Dr. Bove, "strives to characterize the nociceptive primary afferents which innervate the deep paraspinal tissues. In other words, I'm going to find out what types of pain fibers innervate the back, and what they actually respond to."

"Most exciting currently is the discovery that these nociceptors branch, often to other tissues, including the nerve's trunk itself. Pathology of the nerve trunks should therefore be sufficient to transmit impulses perceived as pain. This discovery should lead to a better understanding of referred pain and 'nerve pain,' topics that have received almost no scientific attention."

Dr. Bove named prominent pain researcher Alan R. Light, an associate professor of physiology, as his mentor. "His support has been instrumental in the conception, development, and continued progress of the project."

Dr. Bove noted the stiff competition he faced in obtaining the grant. He made grant applications three separate times, the entire process spanning two years. During this period, Dr. Bove indicated he was discriminated against because he was a chiropractor. He feels there's a bias against chiropractors applying for grants because of their lack of experience in research. While admitting that bias exists for other clinicians seeking grants, Dr. Bove believes the extent of the bias is greater towards chiropractors.

Indeed, grants by the NIH to chiropractors are rare indeed. Some recent successes have occurred: Partap Khalsa, MS, DC, got an NIH award for \$105,900 (see Sept. 11, 1992 issue), and Joel Pickar, DC, PhD (see May 7, 1993 issue). The NIH will also be awarding 10 grants worth a total of \$2 million to

"alternative health care providers" in the near future, but there's no assurance that any of those dollars will go towards chiropractic research.

To put the available research dollars into perspective, the NIH in 1992 awarded Harvard University \$339,533,872; John Hopkins \$207 million; and six other universities over \$100 million each; Duke \$92 million, Univ. of Chicago \$75 million, etc.

Chiropractic's share of NIH dollars, as you see, is paltry, but does not minimize the accomplishments of DCs Bove, Khalsa, and Pickar, nor the efforts of those DCs seeking research grants -- they are fighting the good fight, and should be applauded.

MAY 1993