

Chiropractic in Catalonia

SIXTY YEARS OF CHIROPRACTIC IN BARCELONA

Michael J. Schroeder, Esq.

Chiropractic has a rich and prestigious history in Barcelona, Spain. The first chiropractor in Barcelona, indeed in Spain, was Dr. John Soler. He practiced until approximately 1960. The next chiropractic doctor to practice in Barcelona was a Palmer graduate, Dr. Amadeo Morea, who opened his practice in 1959 and is still practicing there today. Another Palmer graduate, Dr. J. L. Cunill Amat, a 1965 Palmer graduate, was the third chiropractic doctor to open a practice in Barcelona. He was kind enough to open his office to me for an interview and to provide me with this historical information on chiropractic in Catalonia, the region in which Barcelona is located.

Dr. Amat, while still a chemical engineering student in 1961, became attracted to chiropractic when a chiropractor in Switzerland solved his sinus problem. He was so inspired by this treatment that he determined he would go to chiropractic college. From these modest beginnings, chiropractic has now grown in Spain. There is now a Spanish Chiropractic Association, the Asociacion Espanola de Quiropractica, that has been in existence for five years and has just over 30 members. It is affiliated with the European Chiropractic Union. Most of the chiropractors in Barcelona and Spain are foreign born. United States, Danish, and British citizens predominate. The president of the Spanish Association, Dr. Robert J. Gevers, is from Belgium.

The biggest problem facing chiropractic in Spain is that licensing is currently not available. While this so far has not caused chiropractors to be prosecuted for practicing medicine without a license, it has created a fairly substantial problem with untrained persons passing themselves off as chiropractors. The biggest source of this problem is unlicensed and untrained massage therapists who present themselves to the public as being chiropractors. The prospects for enacting a licensing law in Spain looks good.

A chiropractor in Spain does not have access to health insurance reimbursement, and all visits, therefore, are on a cash basis. An average office visit costs 3,000 pesetas, or approximately \$35. Most chiropractors could hope to see between 20 to 25 patients per week.

The biggest problem currently faced by the chiropractic profession in Spain is the almost total lack of awareness by the Spanish people of the existence of chiropractic and its benefits.

Dr. Amat's own office is pleasant, spacious, and equipped with the same sort of equipment that one could expect to see in a chiropractic office in the United States. His patients are very devoted to him and continue to seek his care, despite the lack of any health insurance reimbursement. There are many chiropractic doctors in the United States who would envy the type of patient loyalty necessary to keep a chiropractic practice such as Dr. Amat's in existence.

If anyone wishes to help Dr. Amat in obtaining licensure for chiropractic in Spain, you may contact him:

J. L. Cunill Amat, DC
Balmes, 194, 1,1
Barcelona, Spain 08006
Tele: 34-3-218-56-17.

Michael J. Schroeder, Esq.
Santa Ana, California

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