

"SCAB" and the Shrink"

Richard Tyler, DC

Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics (JMPT) is one of the finest research journals in our profession. In fact, it's pretty safe to say that it's a quality publication that ranks along with the best of any within the healing arts.

In a recent edition there was an interesting paper by a DC who obtained a gratifying visceral response from a patient with chronic organic disorders through the application of structural manipulation. In an almost provocative juxtaposition, the very next paper was a commentary authored by three chiropractors who disdained as "anti-scientific" any hypothesis that might even hint that structural therapy might influence an organic response. One of the authors in particular has made a career of denigrating the chiropractic somatovisceral reflex hypothesis. Like some kind of hired gun, he goes everywhere he can knocking chiropractic to the delight of the medics and insurance companies. Like a super straight -- he can't leave well enough alone -- he just has to be the philosophical architect of the profession.

One can imagine that being a "super pseudomed" must be a drag at times. Just going around begging for acceptance from the medical profession through professional treachery can be exhausting both physically and emotionally.

Just imagine "Dr. Pseudo Med" going to a shrink to resolve some of the tension that being a self-serving "crusader" can bring.

Shrink: Well, Dr. Med, come in and sit down.

Dr. Pseudo Med: Thanks for seeing me. I'm really exhausted from my trips around the country.

S: You do a lot of traveling?

M: Yes, I'm on the executive board of SCAB.

S: SCAB?

M: Yes, that's the "Scientific Chiropractors' Assault Brigade."

S: Hmmm. That sounds pretty aggressive.

M: We are. It's our duty to go to every chiropractic office in the country and destroy, if needed, every unscientific chiropractic establishment. You see -- we have a bunch of cultists in chiropractic who have the nerve to tell people that it's possible for structure to affect function.

S: It can't?

M: I wouldn't expect you to know. But no it can't. There's no scientific proof.

S: But I thought I understood that you chiropractors had been denied research funds for years, so that it was impossible for you to implement acceptable programs. And I understand that lately you've been making up for lost time by funding more and more legitimate research projects.

M: Well, it's a little better than before, but there's still no proof that structure affects function.

S: Do you have scientific proof that it doesn't?

M: Well -- not exactly. But a chiropractor still shouldn't be allowed to tell the patient that it does, if he can't prove it scientifically. That's misleading the public. And the American Chiropractic Association must change its policy statement that claims that structure affects function.

S: Because you don't believe it does?

M: We should only make statements of belief about things we can scientifically prove.

S: And you feel that everyone of the healing arts should subscribe to that concept?

M: Of course.

S: Then I guess everyone would be out of business. Just recently I read that high ranking members of the medical profession testified before a congressional committee that they didn't know the scientific basis of the majority of what they did, and that most of their time was spent guessing about what to do, hoping they wouldn't hurt anyone. I also understand that studies have shown that the medical profession kills about 3,000 people a week with the inappropriate and poor use of drugs and surgery. That doesn't sound very "scientific" to me.

M: Well. ...

S: And then there's the osteopathic medical profession. Not only does the American Osteopathic Association espouse the belief that structure may indeed affect function, but this is constantly reaffirmed in their school catalogues, textbooks, and professional journals. This, they feel, is what sets them apart from the MDs. Now I'm not just talking about ameliorating pain and discomfort. After years of past and continuing research lead by such eminent osteopathic researchers as Burns, Denslow, Chapman, Sunderland, and Korr, quite a "scientific" base of information has been gathered to validate the hypothesis that therapeutic structural manipulation does, in fact, favorably affect the somatovisceral reflex. And they've also demonstrated that the viscerosomatic reflex can have an aberrant effect upon structure and thereby become a viable diagnostic tool.

M: This is all a bunch of unscientific nonsense. We must align ourselves with scientific medicine and make sure our schools become affiliated with universities and teach manipulative medicine.

S: Did you understand a word I said?

M: I don't want to talk to you anymore. I want to talk to my inspiring scientific mentor and get some more inspiration from him. I want to be a real doctor. I want to be liked by people in medicine. I want respect from the medical profession. I don't want to be a dumb chiropractor anymore.

S: That's good. Let it all hang out. Cry if you want.

M: My mummy wanted a (sob) "real" doctor for a son. Now I'm just a (sob) stupid "quacky" chiropractor. Why can't I be on the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) mailing list? Ohhh, why can't I write prescriptions and cut patients with knives? Ohhhhhh. ...

S: So that's what this is all about. You've got to vent your frustration on your colleagues and pander to medical interests so that you'll be treated like a "real" doctor.

M: Oh, it's easy for you to get all uppity because you're an MD.

S: Wrong. I'm a Ph.D., psychologist.

M: No wonder you've been saying such unscientific, anti-scientific things. For a while you started to make sense and that was scary.

S: You're right. You'll feel a lot "safer" with those who aren't open-minded enough to challenge your blatantly prejudiced, self-serving beliefs. Fortunately, your treachery to common sense and your profession is so obvious that it becomes more of an irritant than a viable professional danger.

Well, I could go on but you get the idea. Some people become obsessed with the premise that only they have the answers and espouse truth, and that you and I must think and act as they tell us to. You can almost hear the clanging gates of their minds closing. Fortunately, more of us are wise enough not to get our brains caught in the crunch.

RHT

MARCH 1991