



NEWS / PROFESSION

Northwestern, Palmer Receive Federal Funding for Joint Research Project

**\$2.4 MILLION GRANT WILL FUND FIRST MAJOR STUDY ON CHIROPRACTIC
TREATMENT OF SCIATICA**

Editorial Staff

Northwestern Health Sciences University and Palmer College of Chiropractic have received a \$2.4 million grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant will fund the first full-scale, randomized clinical trial evaluating chiropractic treatment of chronic and subacute back-related leg pain (sciatica).



Researchers at Northwestern's Wolfe-Harris Center for Clinical Studies (WHCCS) and the Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research (PCCR), two of the most active and respected research programs in the chiropractic profession, will team to perform the study, which builds upon two previous pilot studies conducted at Northwestern. Both pilot studies were published in the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* (Bronfort G, Evans RL, Maiers M, Anderson, AF. Spinal manipulation, epidural injections and self-care for sciatica: a pilot study for a randomized clinical trial. *JMPT*, October 2004; 27:503-508; and Bronfort G, Evans RL, Anderson AV, Schellhas KP, Garvey TA, Marks RA, Bittell S. Nonoperative treatments for sciatica: a pilot study for a randomized clinical trial. *JMPT*, October 2000;23(8):536-44).

Leading the randomized clinical trial are Gert Bronfort, DC, PhD, professor and associate vice president of research at WHCCS; and Maria Hondras, DC, MPH, associate professor of research at PCCR. As principal investigators, both doctors understand the value of this collaborative effort:

"Palmer's Center for Chiropractic Research and Northwestern's WHCCS are two of the most established and well-funded chiropractic research facilities in the world," said Dr. Bronfort. "Both institutions are committed to performing high quality research that will identify treatments that will benefit patients. ...While there is preliminary evidence suggesting chiropractic spinal manipulation is beneficial for patients with back-related leg pain, high-quality, randomized clinical trials are needed."

"Our colleagues at Northwestern have an impressive track record for conducting single-site clinical trials, and we hope the current project will be the first of many successful collaborative efforts," commented Dr. Hondras. "Most importantly, we hope the data we gather in this project will translate to improved methods of caring for patients with sciatica - people who endure a great deal of pain in their daily lives."

Beginning in April 2007, 192 patients with back-related leg pain will be recruited over a three-year period; approximately two-thirds will be recruited from the Twin Cities, Minn. area and will receive treatment at Northwestern, while the remaining third will be recruited from the Quad Cities, Iowa area and will be treated at Palmer. To evaluate the benefit of chiropractic care, subjects will be divided into two groups, with one group receiving chiropractic care and exercise instructions, and the second group receiving only exercise instructions.

In addition to the new study on sciatica, the WHCCS (established in 1991) and the PCCR (established in 1995) each boast numerous ongoing projects funded by federal grants. For details on specific research investigations in progress, please visit www.nwhealth.edu/research/WHCCS and www.palmer.edu/PCCR/PCCRhome.htm.

Resources

1. "Nation's Largest Chiropractic Research Institutions Receive Federal Funding for Joint Research Effort." Press release from Northwestern University of Health Sciences, Nov. 6, 2006.
2. "Wolfe-Harris Center at NHSU Submits \$2.4 Million Grant Proposal." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Sept. 1, 2006. www.chiroweb.com/archives/24/18/10.html.

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