



CHIROPRACTIC (GENERAL)

Chiropractic Trends: What's Ahead (Part 1)

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I just completed building out and opening a new office. I am applying what I hear is the word on the "street" in terms of my practice protocols and how to best assist my patients. So, let's roll up our sleeves and talk about the work and opportunities ahead. This three-part series is the distillation of what I think is trending, especially for chiropractors. I hope our profession can work together and use these opportunities to tap into the demand of the mainstream.

Tradition Meets Innovation

First off, I see the interconnection between tradition and innovation. We are each a result of our particular gifts, limitations and experiences. However, our collective patient population has similar features to keep in mind.

Think about this: Sixty-three percent of the population - about the same percentage of Americans who are overweight - believes exercise and diet can make them healthier, leaner and less stressed ... and they still don't do it. (Source: National Center for Health Statistics) Mainstream medicine and the public don't mention the words *subluxation* or *adjustment* to help this situation, but they do hear and understand *movement* and *lifestyle choices*.

At the root of this obesity and lack of exercise problem is motivation, or the lack thereof. It's the difference between wanting to exercise and actually doing it. Chiropractors can be motivational here; we need to be effective at inspiring patients to make healthy choices. Be at the forefront of understanding what the best healthy choices are and sharing that information with your patients - in a loving, yet stern way.

Tap Into the Food Revolution



On television, we have seen cooking and exercise become forms of glamorized entertainment, creating considerable opportunities for retailers, food service and manufacturers. I am certain there will be a growing demand for fresher, less-processed foods and beverages. Learn a little about the brands available and make recommendations to your patients along these lines.

Eggs had a bad name years ago, but now eggs, from chicken to duck, are perceived as having a positive health halo, particularly when cage free. The public increasingly will want local eggs, from free-roaming hens to alternative eggs; from duck to quail. We are moving from dairy that is grass fed to breed-specific dairy (Jersey, Guernsey).

For meat, we have gone from deli meat to lean meats, to white-meat chicken, to hormone-free meat, to buffalo jerky, to dark-meat poultry, to grass-fed beef, to offal / organ meats. For seafood, we went from canned tuna to farmed shellfish to Atlantic salmon and wild salmon, to sustainable sourced seafood. Krill oil is going to trump fish oil for omega-3s.

For nuts and seeds, we have seen the emphasis go from peanuts to nut butter, to almonds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, flax seed, nut meal / flour; and now *chia* seeds and hemp seeds are popular. Nut milk and sprouted seeds are "in" as well. Almond milk now trumps soy milk.

With beans, we had vitamin companies promote isolated soy proteins (milk, analogues), texturized vegetable protein (TVP), lentils, tofu, heirloom beans (*anasazi*), tempeh, miso, and more recently, pea protein. The public is learning about alternative protein sources that include mycoprotein (quorn), rice protein powder (hypoallergenic), quinoa, *seitan* and wheat gluten.

Inflammation Is King

Fat is no longer the food enemy. It's carbs; it's sugar! Sugar is being vilified as "toxic" and [inflammatory](#). The big-name television personalities are finally linking added sugar to systemic inflammation leading to cardiovascular disease and a host of other chronic diseases and ailments. Among the different types of sugar, consumers are perceiving fructose as having the most negative health halo. In addition to diabetes and insulin resistance, and now the link to elevated triglycerides, there is a growing belief that insulin resistance from excess sugar consumption may encourage the growth of cancer cells.

A business opportunity for chiropractors is likely having you become the expert who treats chronic inflammation. The long-term effects of such inflammation manifest in the most chronic conditions of modern time: diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, Alzheimer's, asthma and digestive disorders.

Get your patients off refined carbs, such as added sugars and fructose. Get good at knowing what foods, supplements, modalities and treatments reduce inflammation. Get ahead of the pack and buy a laser device, a lymphatic drainage machine, a deep-muscle stimulator, etc., that helps reduce inflammation.

Gluten-free products hit the mainstream several years ago. For the past 15 years, treating food sensitivities and poor digestion could have made a practice alone. Not today! Now consumers need you to clarify if they can have fiber-rich whole grains or not. Continue to recommend the benefits of whole grains, nuts, seeds, and alternative formats such as nut meal, coconut "flour," and raw, sprouted, popped, and puffed grains.

Digestive health and its relation to the immune system will become more understood by the general public. People will ask you questions about cultured foods and beverages, which offer support with regard to digestive health (digestive enzymes), enhanced immunity (probiotics and beneficial bacteria) and reduction of chronic inflammation (avoidance of chronic modern diseases).

Our great grandparents used what most people call "folk remedies." These products and the knowledge about them will be more in demand. Learn from your supplement vendors what you can sell to your patients.

I still appreciate the [Paleo diet](#) and everything it has done for my patients, but I anticipate seeing consumers "pulling" more plant-based foods to the center of the plate and "pushing" animal products to its edges. It's not about eliminating meat, but letting plant-based products take center stage.

What's Hot in Fitness

Words like *sustainable* and *durable* are in right now. People who work out are looking to bring their workouts to the next level and have a great time doing it. I started teaching my small-group exercise classes in my office again and patients look to me to teach them ways to stay functionally fit. Body-weight exercise, bands and stretch straps, balance and fluidity, core laser training, integrative fascial yoga, combined stillness and movement classes, deep core and pelvic floor training are all "in." Kettlebells, suspensions devices, breathing / diaphragm training, Barre methods, etc., will still have a solid place in the exercise arena, but with less excitement.

We need to tap into the 63 percent of the population that needs our inspiration and knowledge to

exercise. It's less about the group exercise mentality of the '80s and more about functional fitness based on community and team spirit. People want to have "power" to be "warriors." They want to do things that help them be sustainable (healthy aging) and durable (slow down aging).

Recommendations to Stay Ahead

- Patients will continue to struggle with food, so at the very least recommend less sugar, and fresher and less-processed foods and beverages.
- Weight management, satiety and energy are closely aligned with *protein*. As the first meal of the day becomes more than quick carbs, consumers will look to dairy, free-range eggs and global preparations in convenient formats at breakfast occasions. I use a body composition analysis device to tell me exactly how many grams of protein each of my patients needs.
- Be ethical. Transparency is mainstream. Demonstrate values. We are in this business for the long run.
- Helping patients reduce and eliminate systemic inflammation is a bigger name and treatment goal than correcting the subluxation. Your entire practice can be poised to help patients decrease sugar intake (specifically fructose) and inflammation.
- Become a leader in digestion and immune health.
- Consumers are seeking health care providers who are experts at treating soft tissues. They want a practitioner who can revitalize them from old injuries and poor posture, and help them with chronic painful areas.
- Convenience is still a big deal. Create available office hours, demonstrate the ability to talk on the phone, email back and forth, and even have a "vitamin shop" and home healing / exercise aids within your office.
- Posture-specific exercises and treatment for poor posture will be important to know. Your treatment will need to include movement therapy.

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