



FROM FRANCE

International Collaborative Research

by Audrey Murphy, D.C., M.Sc.

If I had been told a year ago, when I had a busy chiropractic practice in Winchester, England, that I'd be Director of the Teaching of Research at the Institut Franco-Européen de Chiropratique (IFCE), in Paris, France, I would have thought it was a bunch of "Blarney." And if I had also been told that I'd be embarking on a collaborative research project with doctors in the United States and have the privilege of meeting some of that country's most esteemed chiropractors, I really would have been incredulous! Originally from Cork in southern Ireland, I was recruited to head up the Teaching of Research by Mr. Charles Martin, director of IFEC. He was aware that I wanted to pursue chiropractic research beyond that which is possible in a clinical setting.

The US connection came about when Dan Murphy (no relation to me), DC, DABCO, and one of the world's leading authorities in whiplash, personal injury and nutrition, visited the Institut two years ago and met with Charles Martin. Dan Murphy realized that Mr. Martin shared similar goals and vision with Harold McCoy, DC, DACS, President and founder of Myo-Logic Diagnostics, Inc., and suggested they meet. Dr. McCoy was impressed with Charles' desire to develop chiropractic research studies at IFEC and to coordinate with research projects in the US. That meeting led to discussions of ongoing collaborative research projects and doctor exchange programs between colleges and universities in the United States and IFEC. It fits perfectly with my new role in creating a research structure at the IFEC, and led to an invitation to attend

the Interdisciplinary Spine Conference in Seattle. There I was able to discuss my research plans with colleagues in the US.

While in Seattle, I learned about ground-breaking research and technology in discussions with chiropractors, physical therapists, and medical doctors — all dedicated in their commitment to cooperative interdisciplinary health care and scientific evidence-based research. It was a gathering of some of the brightest minds in health care today. Every day meetings were scheduled with extraordinary people from throughout the United States, and there was never a dull moment, even when clouds enveloped Mount Rainier and hung over beautiful Puget Sound. The level of research was excellent and cutting-edge, and no one left the conference without several new ideas and treatment approaches in mind for Monday morning's clinical practice.

Jim Robinson, MD, PhD, a medical doctor and associate clinical professor at the University of Washington Multidisciplinary Pain Center, discussed with me the computerized Regional Muscular Sensitivity/Pressure Pain Threshold protocols he is developing with Dr. McCoy for evidence-based research. We discussed chronic pain and the research parameters he is putting into place with these new protocols. A distinguished researcher and expert on chronic pain, Dr. Robinson has offered to donate some time to collaborate with me on a research project to test protocols for regional muscular sensitivity using the MSM 7000 hardware and software developed by Myo-Logic Diagnostics, Inc. This project will be a major benefit and incentive for us to

further develop our research department capabilities here in Paris and be part of a major international research program. Chronic pain is of particular interest to me, as I'm licensed in the practice of chiropractic and traditional Chinese acupuncture and practiced in a hospital in England.

The conference focused on "The Chiropractic Paradigm" as supported by the Association of Chiropractic Colleges in the areas of subluxation, neurology, diet, and nutrition. The topics clarified what we all were taught in college: how the practice of chiropractic focuses on the relationship between structure (primarily the spine) and function (as coordinated by the nervous system) and how that relationship affects the preservation and restoration of health. They emphasized that a strong philosophical base must be supported and balanced by the art and science of chiropractic. Beyond chiropractic, they reinforced the need for cooperative interdisciplinary health care and scientific evidence-based research to affect clinical outcomes.

Dr. Dan Murphy spoke on neurology and its association with chronic pain. A well-known expert in whiplash, he focused on the objectively measured whole-body impairments of ligament, disc, and facet capsule tissues caused by whiplash trauma. He also spoke on nutrition and its impact on immune and neurological function. A strong proponent of Omega 3 supplementation to counteract the trans-fatty acids and Omega 6's in our diet, Dr. Murphy stressed the important benefits of an anti-inflammatory diet in treating chronic pain. It was exciting to hear him speak. I can see why doctors flock to his seminars and hold him in high esteem worldwide.

Along with 60 other participants, I saw and experienced the new technologies first-hand. I was assessed with orthopedic, neurological, and chiropractic examinations. My spine and extremities were examined with motion palpation to assess for hypo- and hypermobile subluxations, and X-rays were taken of my spine to evaluate whether or not instability existed following a whiplash incident two years ago. My

global and segmental spinal ranges of motion and my upper and lower body muscle strength were assessed while my posture, foot biomechanics, and gait were examined to check for the presence of abnormal afferent proprioceptive/mechanoreceptive neurological input affecting the postural kinetic chain.

I saw how data on spinal range of motion, muscle strength, and pressure pain thresholds are entered automatically into the MSM 7000 computer software, via wireless radio frequency, from the hand-held measuring device used to evaluate me, the "patient." The MSM 7000 was developed as a functional outcome assessment and evidence-based research system. Since I was measured before and after treatment, it was clearly demonstrated how the software can document the patient's presenting situation and track the functional changes which occur in response to specific treatment. Objective measurements provide important evidence of functional impairment and document the need for continuing care, especially in cases where functional impairment is profound, even though pain may have diminished. It became very clear to me how important it is from a clinical and research standpoint to look at the *functional* model, rather than the *pain* model. The resulting procedures were all leading edge and designed to improve articular, neurological, motor, autonomic, and immune function.

Now I'm back in Paris, where I moved from England in September last year. I am very busy applying all these theories and techniques as I establish a core research group at the Institut Franco-Européen de Chiropratique. I'm putting into place the collaborative research project to test regional muscular sensitivity protocols. I sense how my enthusiasm from having experienced the latest techniques and research in the United States carries over into my lectures to the students at IFEC. They, too, are excited about being on the leading edge of chiropractic's global advances. Several of them will assist me in the research project, which will provide further evidence for the need for chiropractic care of patients worldwide.

AUDREY MURPHY, DC, MSc, is Director of Training and Research at the Institut Franco-Européen de Chiropratique in Paris, France. A 1989 graduate of The Anglo-European College of Chiropractic in Bournemouth, England, Dr. Murphy taught at her alma mater for a few years before opening her own practice in Winchester. She obtained her Masters in Research Methods in Health from Southampton University Hospital, Southampton, England. Dr. Murphy is especially interested in promoting excellence in chiropractic research education and developing a "tool" to help with smooth integration of the two paradigms (Qualitative and Quantitative research methodologies) to ensure that all the facts, subjective and objective, are utilized in chiropractic research.

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