



AROUND THE WORLD

Bringing Chiropractic to St. Petersburg, Russia: My Journey

By Alexandre Kononov, D.C.

So here I was, standing in the middle of the empty street early in the morning looking at a small green car sprinting away. My American friends and colleagues were in it on their way to the airport. They were on their way back home after a very long but very productive week in St. Petersburg, Russia. I was on my way to the empty room where I planned to get some sleep. By now I was not sure about the time or even the date. Those "white nights" are way overrated. All they do is make your brain confused.

Now, let me start from the beginning...September 2005 was mine. It was the first time I met with the group of American and Russian doctors participating in this truly historic project. It was the time when I decided to become a part of it as well. It was the time when I committed myself to the development of Chiropractic in Russia.

It was May 27, 2006. I was standing at the railway station in Chisinau, Moldova getting ready to depart for St. Petersburg, Russia. Looking around and trying to imagine my next two-day trip in a train. I had not used this kind of transportation in over a decade. So that itself was exciting. The only thing that I was somewhat concerned about were my possible companions.

I was hoping to get some work done and therefore not looking forward to travel with the "typical" Moldavians going "north". They usually are construction workers going to Russia for a few months at a time, to make some money and then come back. So the trip itself usually involves some heavy drinking and eating, something that they will not be doing while working.

As I entered my compartment, I was pleasantly surprised to find that my only companion was a pregnant woman, the two other seats were empty. We introduced ourselves as the train took off. After a few hours of talking and looking out the window it was time to go to sleep. We crossed the border into the Ukraine around 3 a.m. but got two more companions shortly before. I did not have any time or desire to "examine" them in the middle of the night, I just went back to sleep.

In the morning I realized that my plans to be productive were not to become true. My new "friends" were the typical representatives of today's Moldova. Construction workers, ready to drink and eat, ready to have their "last" party for the next few months.

All my attempts to justify the lack of desire to start drinking before noon did not work. Here came the typical jester, an arm around my shoulders and a simple but yet "complex" question, "Do you respect us?" If you say "yes" it means you have to drink. If you say "no," well...

I don't really want to go into the details but let me just tell you that day



Myself, Dr. Sherry Durrett and Dr. Michael Tetrault outside St. Elizabeth Hospital in St. Petersburg.

is almost completely erased in my memory. All I can remember is great tasting homemade Moldavian food and mouth burning Moldavian moonshine. The next thing I remember is waking up in the middle of the night and wondering what time it was and why I was fully dressed sleeping on my bag. All I could do at that moment was go back to sleep and ask questions tomorrow. So that is exactly what I did. The next day I had a great time getting to know my new Moldavian friends all over again without the drinks but with a headache instead.

Shortly after noon I arrived at my destination, St. Petersburg, my new home, my future.

SUNDAY

I was picked up as promised, by a driver who took me to the hotel where Dr. Sherry Durrett and Dr. Michel Tetrault were expecting my arrival.

I was very glad to finally see them and continue the work on the project. It felt like all the problems and difficulties that had taken place for me in my

country during the past eight months never existed. I felt comfortable, ready to work and what was even more important, I felt the same from my highly respected colleagues.

We went to lunch and started working right away. We discussed the "short term" plans for the next week. As we started talking I began to realize more and more the magnitude of this project. The "short term" plans sounded like something that would take more than a week to fulfill. After the meal in a nice Turkish restaurant we went back to the hotel where we continued working till way past midnight.

As I mentioned in the beginning, St. Petersburg has so called "white nights." It is a very unique natural occurrence that takes place from the middle of May for about two months. The dark part of the night gets shorter and shorter till June 22 after which it reverses.

The "white nights" are widely welcomed by the tourists as it gives them a chance to enjoy the beautiful city almost 24 hours a day, but is very hard for newcomers who are here to work. As I found out, I have a very strong association with the amount of light outside and the time of the day. The fact that it stays light for so long is very good from the productivity factor but very hard as far as resting goes. I came to that conclusion the very next morning.

MONDAY

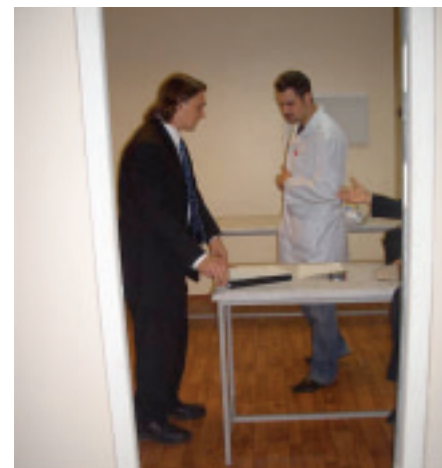
We woke up around 8 am. After a great breakfast we went to St. Elizabeth Hospital to meet with the Russian participants of this life changing project.

Our meeting with Drs. Boris and Alexandre Taits was productive and gave me a better idea of what exactly was ahead of us all. We discussed the next steps to be taken and agreed to meet back on Friday the same week. We left the office of the Chief Doctor, Boris Taits, and went to see the office location options accompanied by Dr. Alexandre Taits, my new boss. After carefully evaluating all the options available we agreed on office #5, a two-room corner office.

We measured the office, discussed



Reviewing layout of the office with Dr. Alexandre Taits



Checking out the treatment room

the exact equipment location and the entire layout. Satisfied with our work at the hospital for the day we went to lunch.

After a nice, short meal, during which we continued our discussions we went to a notary public office to translate and notarize my diploma and transcripts. We found it to be very busy. We were asked to wait in line to see the translator. Fifteen or so minutes later I had a chance to present my case to one of them.

Right away we ran into difficulties. The Apostille given to me upon my request by the State of Iowa through Palmer College of Chiropractic was "not good enough" for a Russian notary public. They agreed to make an official translation but warned me of possible problems with future notarization. Left with little choice I had to agree to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

the total practice management system

Save time and lower your costs with:

- SCHEDULING
- PATIENT SELF CHECK-IN
- CHART NOTES
- TREATMENT PLANS
- PATIENT TRACKING
- ELECTRONIC BILLING, RECORDS, & FORMS
- TRACKING & GRAPHING STATS
- OPTIMIZED FOR VOICE RECOGNITION
- TOUCHSCREEN OPTIMIZED
- EASY, INTUITIVE INTERFACE

Come see our new online demo and revamped website!

www.chiro-touch.com

Or call us at:

1-800-852-1771

chirotouch

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

The paperless office is here!