



Death of a profession: Can we learn from this?

A few years ago *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association* had a review paper* by Lincoln J. Fry, Ph.D., former chair and professor at the College of Osteopathic Medicine at Nova University, Florida.

I hope the people who control the CCE, National, Western States, Northwestern and other so-called chiropractic schools read his paper for Dr. Fry is describing where they are taking our profession, Fry writes:

"Osteopathic medicine has been described as a being in a state of crisis" with the source of the turmoil "rooted in the transformation of 'osteopathy' to 'osteopathic medicine,' with the latter characterized by full-service healthcare.

"This transformation has won acceptance...but it has also created new problems...concomitant with the emphasis on full-service healthcare is an apparent decline in the profession's emphasis on osteopathic manipulative therapy(OMT). Once seen as the backbone of osteopathic medicine, some students now report that osteopathic physicians discourage them from using OMT in hospital settings."

Fry cites studies showing a decline in the use of OMT since the 1930s and a 1974 report that less than 17% of patient office visits include the use of OMT by DOs. Only 14% of osteopathic physicians used OMT on at least half their patients.

"The decreased use of OMT is seen as a threat to the unique identity of the osteopathic medical profession..."

The chiropractic profession should think about this the next time CCE cites schools for not giving enough blood tests or urinalysis in clinics but doesn't seem to care about spinal adjusting of subluxations.

Tedd Koren, DC
Pennsylvania

* Fry LJ. Preliminary finding on the use of osteopathic manipulative treatment by osteopathic physicians. *J Am Osteopathic Assn* 1996;96:9)

Chiropractors should have a combined treatment approach?

I will be surprised if you have the courage to enter this letter in your paper. I expect you think patients do not need a voice, just the few chiropractors you represent.

We completely disagree with your stand on the role of chiropractic, and so does most of our profession. Most chiropractors in the UK and Canada try their best to juggle patient needs. I am sure the USA is no different. That includes giving advice on combined treatment approaches. Physiotherapy, massage, acupuncture, medicines and chiropractic. Contrary to your statement that "medically oriented chiropractors are trying to change the nature of the profession against the wishes of many," it is our patients that have shown the way. I would propose that you are trying to defend the indefensible, an outdated approach, of our profession against the wishes of the many. The many being both most of our profession, and certainly most of our patients.

Unlike you, I do not feel we need to reinvent the health care system. We need to be fully complementary partners in it.

Unlike you, I do not feel that adjustments are so special no other practitioner should give them...

Drug free profession? Are you kidding? Are you going to tell us all the drugs do not work, or that they do not help people regain their health. Is your home totally free of drugs and chemicals? Our profession is in danger of missing a simple truth. Our patients do not have drug free homes. They smoke, drink and drug their way through life...just like you...

Clinging to a past simplistic concept is not a proactive or organized approach to our future. It is ignorance. It guarantees a stagnant and ineffective professional. One working in a vacuum only occupied by the alternative therapies.

I am ready to practice chiropractic, and to do it logically and with compassion... In your paper (page 12) is an advert showing a very suspiciously youthful Arnold Schwarzenegger. He uses chiropractic and medicine and physiotherapy and massage and nutrition. So too should we.

I am a practitioner with experience of practice in Canada and UK. I have been in full time practice since 1986, sixteen years.

Dr. Richard Lambert
6580 Sooke Road
Sooke, BC, Canada V0S 1N0

Dear Dr. Lambert:

Thank you for your comments which we are publishing not to prove we have the courage to do so, but to show how easy it is for someone to misread or misinterpret something because of preconceived notions about a person or an organization.

As you disagree with some of our viewpoints, we too disagree with some of

yours. For instance we do not agree that chiropractors provide a "complementary" service. We provide a unique and singular service. According to Webster and Funk and Wagnels **complement** is "that which fills up or completes." **Complementary** is "helping to constitute a whole" and this is certainly not what chiropractic is to medical care. Unlike you, I believe we do need to reinvent the health care system. As it is today, it will bankrupt our economy and corrupt the total concept of health and wellness. We also disagree with you that the adjustment is nothing special, in fact we believe that the chiropractic adjustment is what identifies and distinguishes the practice of chiropractic.

But first let's clear up what I hold to be a total misconception on your part. When we in ICA say that chiropractic is "drug free" we mean that *chiropractors do not prescribe drugs*, prescription or non-prescription. By the way your assumption that everyone has drugs and chemicals in their homes is wrong. You would not even find an aspirin in my house, however a bottle of scotch may be somewhere!

Doctors in the ICA are not opposed to the "wise use of drugs" but this is a medical not a chiropractic decision. It is a pity that as a chiropractor you do not think the adjustment is anything special and that anyone can perform it. ICA's policy handbook explains all this very well, if you want a copy please call ICA or check its website www.chiropractic.org.

Yes, Schwarzenegger may use all the different types of health care that you mention, but I can guarantee you that his chiropractor (and he is personally known to ICA) does not also prescribe his medications if and when they are needed.

Congratulations on your 16 years in practice. Next year I will be blessed with my 50th. Someday you may rethink what you have said in your letter, although it's not likely that I will be here to remind you!

Fred H. Barge, DC, PhC
Chair, Editorial Committee

Book review: "The Chiropractic Profession"

Dr. Barge's critical review of my book, *The Chiropractic Profession* (The Chiropractic Choice, November 2002), is obviously written for a specific audience — the ICA membership. For this sector of the chiropractic world he may well remain an effective communicator.

My book was commissioned by the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research (FCER) for a very different audience — Barbara Walters and all those stakeholders in the media and health care who remain uninformed about and extremely critical of the chiropractic profession, and who greatly reduce the flow of patients seeking chiropractic care. Despite Dr. Barge's point of view I am confident that my book represents effective communication with them...

David Chapman-Smith
Ontario, Canada

Dear Mr. Chapman-Smith:

There are two statements in your letter that I wish to clarify.

First your inference that my review of your book was targeted to a "specific audience." It was not. It was placed in *The Chiropractic Choice* which reaches the entire profession. Remember, it is the profession's **choice** to either follow your musculoskeletal specialty stance or the non-therapeutic stance of chiropractic care for everyone needing spinal adjustments.

Second, in the forward to your book, Wayne Thomas, M.D. states, "I was asked to write the forward to this book for the public..." This is far from your contention that it was meant for "Barbara Walters and all those stakeholders in the media and healthcare..." In any case I do not feel it is in the profession's best interest to promote and/or establish a musculoskeletal profile for the practice of chiropractic...

Fred H. Barge, DC, PhC
Davenport, Iowa

Some understand our message — thank you

I continue to enjoy the refreshing approach of your publication, *The Chiropractic Choice*...keep up the fine work.

Charles A. Cooper, DC
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Dr. Cooper

To you and the many others who have sent us positive comments about *The Chiropractic Choice*...thank you!

Write to us!

The Chiropractic Choice would like to hear from you. Though we may not be able to respond to everyone, your letters help us understand your thinking and the issues important to you. They keep us informed. Selected letters will be published, as far as possible, as is, and only edited for length or relevance. Letters for the Mailbox column may be e-mailed to thechiropracticchoice@chiropractic.org or mailed to: The Chiropractic Choice, 1110 N. Glebe Road, Suite 1000, Arlington, VA 22201, USA. Letters must include complete name and address of author.