

## Not Real Doctors

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According to an article in the December 2001 issue of Men's Health magazine titled: Is This Your Spinal Answer, chiropractors aren't "real doctors." Author Christopher McDougall didn't stop there, he had some other choice words and advice on chiropractic for readers of Men's Health.

Among them: "And if you're like me, you always nodded, said 'Right,' and made a mental note that there was no way you would ever let some quack without a medical degree screw with your spine."

McDougall goes on to further insult the profession by supporting the AMA's assertion that chiropractic was "dangerous hokum." He quotes Mark Sanders, D.C. asserting that chiropractors overtreat and use buzzwords like subluxation "which refers to supposed slight deviations in the spine..." Dr. Sanders thinks this is "baloney."

Who else did McDougall consult with on his Pulitzer Prize winning investigative journalism? Why the National Association of Chiropractic Medicine, of course. And what would a negative chiropractic article be without a cameo by Dr. Samuel Homola who informs readers that "...spinal manipulation can relieve some types of back pain." According to him, care for anything else can lead to serious problems like "strokes and paralysis." [Remember this is from a "doctor" who doesn't have a working knowledge of normal neuroanatomy. And of course McDougall throws in the usual quote from the MD who warns about the twisting of necks.](#)

The advice from Men's Health & McDougall's includes:

- Keeping your children away from chiropractors until "...after he graduates from medical school."
- Staying away from chiropractors who use Surface Electromyography
- Stay away from chiropractors whose treatment lasts more than a month
- Chiropractors use x-rays only to "pad the bill."
- Stay away from chiropractors who do not reject "the philosophy of subluxation" and are not members of the National Association of Chiropractic Medicine
- Don't have adjustments for headaches, get your neck massaged instead.
- Skip chiropractic if you have a degenerated disk or radiating pain

I encourage all chiropractors to let the Editor of Men's Health know that you found McDougall's article insulting and inaccurate. Be calm and civil about it and stick to the facts. I have copied my letter to the Editor below and you can reach the [Editor through their site](#) or the address on my letter. Copy me on your letter and we'll post them on JVSr.com. As always I look forward to your feedback comments or suggestions.

Regards, Dr. Matthew McCoy [editor@jvsr.com](mailto:editor@jvsr.com) Editor - Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research <http://www.jvsr.com>

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Mr. David Zinczenko Editor in Chief Men's Health 33 E. Minor Street Emmaus, PA 18098

Dear Editor,

I'm writing in response to Christopher McDougall's article titled: Is This Your Spinal Answer in the December, 2001 issue of Men's Health. While Mr. McDougall might feel many of his comments were funny and accurate I'm certain that the chiropractic profession as a whole did not. The

source for his article appears to be the National Association of Chiropractic Medicine, a group whose entire membership could meet in a phone booth and which is not considered a part of mainstream chiropractic.

The author's contention that "chiropractors aren't real doctors" reveals a great deal of ignorance and is an insult to the more than 70,000 professionals who have already earned a chiropractic diploma as well as to the nearly 30,000 who soon will. The comment reflects poorly on its author, your magazine and its Editors.

McDougall goes on to state that the "AMA dismissed chiropractic as dangerous hokum, and for good reason." Apparently Judge Susan Getzendanner of the United States District Court did not agree with Mr. McDougall. On August 27, 1987 the AMA and its co-conspirators (the Judge's term) were found guilty of violating the antitrust laws of the United States through their efforts to destroy chiropractic. So serious did Judge Getzendanner feel about the violations that she ordered a permanent injunction against the AMA. The evidence gathered over the 14 year legal battle proved that the AMA was not interested in what was best for patients but in what was best for achieving it's agenda: eliminating chiropractic as a health care alternative.

McDougall's inference that the condition of vertebral subluxation is not a serious public health issue is of real concern. His contention is akin to saying that dental caries do not exist and left unanswered poses a threat to public health since a person with a subluxation may not get needed care. Readers of Men's Health should know that state laws, the United States Federal Government, The World Chiropractic Alliance, The Council on Chiropractic Practice, The International Chiropractor's Association, The American Chiropractor's Association, The Federation of Straight Chiropractic Organizations, and The Association of Chiropractic Colleges all define the responsibility of chiropractors as the detection and correction of vertebral subluxation and its resultant neurological interference.

The chiropractic guideline document: Vertebral Subluxation in Chiropractic Practice, produced by the Council on Chiropractic Practice was reviewed by an independent research agency (ECRI) which is a Collaborating Center of the World Health Organization. Based on this review it was accepted for inclusion in the National Guideline Clearinghouse of the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research of the United States Federal Government.

The existence of subluxation is in accordance with the published paradigm statement of The Association of Chiropractic Colleges, which was accepted and signed by every Chiropractic College President in North America. The ACC defines the purpose, principles and practice of chiropractic as the finding and reduction of vertebral subluxations, which will prevent and restore health by removing interference to the body's inherent recuperative powers. This document, among other things, states that chiropractic as a profession "focuses particular attention on the subluxation."

The assessment and management of vertebral subluxation is either taught as part of the regular curriculum of chiropractic colleges in North America or as part of their post graduate programs. All of these programs, including the general curriculum of the chiropractic colleges and the post graduate programs, are approved and Accredited by the Council on Chiropractic Education which is subject to the rules and authority of the United States Federal Government's Department of Education. These schools also hold accreditation through various local and regional accrediting bodies.

The American Medical Association, in its Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment, list the following as acceptable means to rate impairment: Impairment due to loss of muscle power and motor function, impairment due to abnormal motion of the spine, impairment due to loss of motion segment integrity, impairment due to disc problems, impairment due to pain or sensory deficit, and segmental instability. These are, in fact, components of the Vertebral Subluxation Complex.

The Guidelines for Evaluation and Management Services published by the Health Care Financing Administration of the United States Federal Government and the American Medical Association (May 1997) outline what an objective examination should consist of and these include commonly used neuromusculoskeletal exam procedures within chiropractic such as: postural analysis, palpation, assessment for subluxation, range of motion and assessment of muscle tone. All of these are used by chiropractors to assess and manage subluxation.

The Federal Government of the United States specifically defines what chiropractors do as the detection and correction of subluxation under Medicare and Federal worker's compensation laws. Common to all state statutes is the adjustive process being utilized to reduce subluxations and the resultant interference to nerve transmission. No less than 38 states employ the term adjustment in licensing laws in reference to the procedures applied by chiropractors. Eighteen state statutes additionally include the concept of manipulation, 34 states contain specific references to responsibility for neurological complications of biomechanical origin (subluxation) and over half the chiropractic profession practice in these states.

In addition, 11 states specifically discuss the concept of subluxation in their statutes by using the term and for those that do not specifically use the term there is an implied understanding of the concept in their statutes.

The existence of subluxation and its acceptance is spelled out in explicit detail by published policy statements of chiropractic organizations as well as federal and state laws regulating the practice of chiropractic. The epidemiology of subluxation has been researched since the inception of chiropractic over 100 years ago with basic science and clinical research to further elucidate the nature of it continuing to this day. McDougall's comments regarding subluxation are irresponsible and lack any scientific justification.

McDougall's assertion that patients not receive neck adjustments for headache flies in the face of the current scientific literature on the topic and his concerns about stroke have been solidly refuted in the literature. His idea that children should not receive the care and attention of a chiropractor is as absurd as insisting that children not see a dentist, or have their eyes or ears checked. I refer the reader to the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association <http://www.4icpa.org> for more information on the issue of children and chiropractic.

The entirety of McDougall's article focuses on the issue of musculoskeletal pain and ignores the impact chiropractic care has on the emotional and social well being of those who receive it. For example, this issue was reported in the largest single study of patients under chiropractic care in the history of the profession. The study included nearly 3000 patients and was conducted by Robert Blanks, Ph.D., a Professor in the Department of Anatomy and Neurobiology of the College of Medicine at the University of California, Irvine. This study clearly suggests that chiropractic's effects go beyond the simple amelioration of back pain.

I trust you will inform your readers of the facts regarding these matters and I would hope that in the future there would be more scrutiny of articles that could have a tremendous impact on public health. Anything less is irresponsible and reflects poorly on the reputation of your magazine.

Best Regards,

Dr. Matthew McCoy Editor - Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research <http://www.jvsr.com>

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