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Characterization of side effects sustained by chiropractic students during their undergraduate training in technique class at a chiropractic college: a preliminary retrospective study

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To the Editor:

I wanted to share how proud I was to be a chiropractor and impressed I was that CMCC had the research integrity to put their students and chiropractic ahead of dogma and self-interests. I think this article is something powerfully pro-chiropractic and shows that chiropractic colleges care about their students and the profession is brave enough to take a stand and to do so in a publication.

When I was a student an instructor who was cavalier and extremely forceful with his cervical adjustment injured me for a few weeks. My fellow students wouldn't have had the audacity to use that much force indiscriminately, and I had no way to suspect the manner of his care. It did teach me to be more discerning in the future and how it feels to be on the "receiving end" of an adjustment delivered with little consciousness.

During the 25 years I have been teaching, after graduating, I met three separate students who indicated that they were injured either at the clinic or while being "set up on" in technique class. One of them was a bit "off the wall" so most of us just chalked it up to him being odd, but when I met the other two and particularly the current one I am treating in my office, it made me step back and think. The patient I am currently treating had a severe injury to his lumbosacral region and was unable to practice for his first 8 months out of college as well as needing ongoing care for pain relief and to help recover his prior activities of daily living.

It seems only reasonable that learning manual therapeutic methods would inadvertently lead to some unpredictable and unintentional side effects with a subset of students. As a profession our schools and administrators need to protect that subset of students and tailor a program that is a safe and effective learning process. I believe most schools will see this study as something to help improve their curriculum and I do think that this study shows that CMCC is trying to lead the way in the field of chiropractic internationally.

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