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Newsletter

MARCH 2009

Heroism and Health Care

One of the distinctions we try to make is the difference between health care and sick care. Our culture has so abused the term “health” that it’s lost its meaning.

The mainstay of many television dramas is the heroic, lifesaving that takes place in hospitals. Whether the main character is a crusty, ill-tempered doctor, over-confident emergency room intern or a compassionate surgeon, the underlying message is the same: medicine saves lives.

And it does. But it isn’t health care.

True, the fragility of life creates the theater necessary to hold the attention of viewers, so it can be sold to advertisers—the primary purpose of television. But what’s missing from these fantasies is the fact that our so-called health care system is burdened by expensive, heroic measures delivered in the last six months or so of life. These procedures are often used to treat disease states caused by neglect or poor lifestyle choices.

I mention this because true health care isn’t heroic. Unless you consider getting adjusted on a regular basis heroic! Or eating a salad instead of a burger. Or climbing the stairs rather than taking the elevator. Or drinking pure water instead of a soda. But if you do, you’re a hero in my book!

“I didn’t tell you this, but...”

It’s a statement chiropractors often hear during the early stages of new patient care. They usually go on to describe some aspect of their health that has improved along with the problem that prompted them to begin care in the first place.

Those who see chiropractic as merely a treatment for headaches and back pain overlook the more significant role that chiropractic can play in overall health. Since chiropractors focus on the integrity of your nervous system, and your nervous system controls every bodily function, chiropractic care has often helped resolve a variety of non-spinal health problems.

Let’s say you know someone with high blood pressure. At first glance, high blood pressure appears to be a circulatory problem. But not so fast!

It’s the brain that controls and regulates every bodily function via nerve messages sent back and forth over the spinal cord. Nerve interference along the spine can produce a variety of health problems. Correct the spinal problem and circulatory and other problems often improve.

Does that make chiropractic a treatment for high blood pressure? Of course not. The intent of chiropractic care is to restore the function to a compromised nervous system. Instead of ‘side effects’ the happy result are ‘positive effects.’ Throughout your body!

Knowing Where to Adjust

Sometimes a patient will notice that their particular spinal complaint is in one area of their spine, but their chiropractor doesn't adjust there. Instead, they adjust a different part of their spine.

How come?

It's tempting to think of the spine as 24 parts. Or three different regions. Instead, chiropractors see it as an integrated whole. Since your spine is designed to help you deal with gravity, a problem in one area is often offset by a problem in another. We call these compensation reactions.

For example. Someone complaining of low back pain can often have even a more profound problem in their upper neck. But it hasn't produced symptoms. Yet. Their head misalignment is producing the problem in their lower spine. As we adjust their neck (where there are no symptoms) it can better support the weight of the body and the low back pain resolves!

Or vice versa.

So, while chiropractic adjustments are specific and targeted, a chiropractor's focus is on the integrity of your entire spine, not just the area exhibiting symptoms.

One more reason why you can't judge your health by how you feel.

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