

Dr Chris Colloca Interview: Part 1

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The Australian Spinal Research Foundation (*Spinal Research*) is continually extending its contacts and influence within the international research community for the benefit of the Australasian Chiropractic profession. There is some groundbreaking research being done throughout the world and to give you an insight into one of the world leading Chiropractic researchers I have interviewed Dr Chris Colloca. Here is the first article of a two-part series.

Hi Chris, you have done many wonderful things in Chiropractic, what was your inspiration for becoming a Chiropractor?

While in College, to earn money during semester breaks, I worked as a carpenter. After my senior year, I noticed that my right hand would go numb upon swinging a hammer and I became very concerned. My mother, a seamstress, previously had carpal tunnel surgery and I unknowingly thought the problem may be hereditary. Someone said, why don't you see a chiropractor. I reluctantly said, "I don't have a back problem. I have a hand problem."

At wits end, I tried chiropractic and was adjusted with an Activator Instrument in my neck and right upper extremity. After two weeks of care, I returned for my next visit and proclaimed, "Doc, you're a miracle worker - you fixed me." The chiropractor said, "Chris, I didn't do the healing, your body did." It was like a light went on that day for me and having studied exercise science in college, I understood a lot about health, but not the Big Idea. That week, I turned down two job offers to go to Graduate School and become a coach, and instead enrolled in Chiropractic College.

B. J. Palmer once said, "you never know how far reaching something you say, think, or do today can effect countless millions tomorrow." That adjustment brought me to chiropractic - which was followed by me developing my own instrument adjusting instrument and technique which is now in use in over 5,000 chiropractic offices in every state in the U.S. and over thirty countries around the world - providing chiropractic adjustments to millions of patients. It's amazing!

What do you love most about being in practice?

I love the satisfaction that I get when the patient gets off the table and has results. I love the stories that patients tell me about how their lives have been transformed because of chiropractic care. I love the challenge of difficult cases that no one else has been able to help. And, I love seeing the light go on for patients when they get it.

What get's you out of bed in the morning?

The burning desire to be better and live an extraordinary life. I travel to speak about chiropractic about 35-40 weekends per year to nearly every major city in the U.S. and faraway places around the world. This morning, I'm writing to you from the Rainforest of Brazil. I'm here with my two friends who are spine surgeons - one from Adelaide and one from Belgium - who did his fellowship in spine surgery in Adelaide several years ago. We took a week's holiday to explore this amazing wilderness after giving a course in Cartagena, Columbia. Imagine the opportunity for me - being the only chiropractor invited to present to spine surgeons from South America letting them know our theories on how chiropractic works. It's groundbreaking.



Where does Chiropractic's research focus need to be?

Chiropractic has done a wonderful job in producing clinical trials that have given us clout and credibility among government agencies, insurance equality legislation, and licensure in countries that didn't even have a chiropractic law yet. This line of research has been very necessary. However, my opinion is that chiropractic's research focus should aim to better understand the mechanisms of how adjustments work so we understand dosage. What I mean by dosage is how much force, at what level, at what speed, at what vector, how often, and when to stop for wellness care. If we truly had objective measures of when a patient needed an adjustment and how much of an adjustment (force, speed, frequency), we could validate our wellness model for chiropractic. That being - taking care of the healthy people instead of waiting for people to get sick and then seek our care. That's disease care, not health care.

In the second part of this interview to be published next month, Dr Colloca talks about his groundbreaking *research including his travelling to Adelaide* over the past five years to measure neurophysiological and biomechanical responses to chiropractic thrusts and his working relationship with physicians and scientists.

Dr Colloca will be speaking at the Dynamic Growth Congress in February 2009.

Interview by Dr Tony Rose, on behalf of Spinal Research.