

Wellness and Chiropractic: Oxymoronic, Redundant, Synonymous or simply a Perfect Marriage?

By Dr James Chestnut

Is wellness chiropractic a redundant term? Is it an oxymoronic term (like holistic allopathy)? Or, are all chiropractors inherently wellness doctors and the practice of wellness and chiropractic synonymous?

The answer to all the above is a resounding no! The truth is that wellness and chiropractic have distinct meanings, but share enough philosophical and/or paradigmatic constructs that they have the potential to form a perfect marriage.

In reality, it is most accurate to state that chiropractic can be practiced within the wellness paradigm very naturally and, furthermore, that chiropractic is the most suitable profession to deliver wellness care to a public that is literally dying for it, or, more accurately, for lack of it.

Clearly wellness and lack of vertebral subluxation complex are not synonymous. However, and equally clear is the fact that, it is not possible to be well if vertebral subluxation complex is present as vertebral subluxation complex represents a non-homeostatic state or a state of adaptive physiology or an allostatic load, which makes a state of wellness impossible.

Chiropractic is a necessary component of wellness care, but not the only component of wellness care. Wellness care, by definition, has the goal of moving toward or attaining homeostasis in body and mind. This can only be accomplished through pure and sufficient lifestyle choices and the removal of toxicity and/or deficiency from the lifestyle. Wellness practitioners then must have a thorough understanding of what a pure and sufficient lifestyle represents. They must have knowledge of what raw materials the innate genetic blueprint requires and they must have knowledge of what environmental stimuli are toxic. This is the very foundation of what I teach. My goal is to provide practitioners with the necessary information and training to become evidence-based wellness experts.

So, all chiropractors are not wellness practitioners. It is possible to practice chiropractic and have as your sole goal the removal of vertebral subluxation complex and not to address lifestyle toxicities or deficiencies and/or not provide information about lifestyle purity and sufficiency. This would not make you less of a chiropractor; it would, however, by definition, make you less of a wellness doctor.



Dr James Chestnut

This raises an interesting question. Is being a wellness doctor congruent with the paradigm and philosophy of chiropractic?

The answer is a resounding yes! Not only is chiropractic within the wellness paradigm, addressing wellness lifestyle choices was described as part of chiropractic practice in the earliest chiropractic texts. Furthermore, the context in which this is discussed is in perfect alignment with the wellness paradigm that I espouse.

As an example, The Chiropractic Textbook by Stephenson (1927) states that “...nutritional hygiene is not dieting but common sense. It is simply the restoration of normal and natural environmental conditions.” In other words, nutrition, within the chiropractic wellness paradigm, should be based on providing nutrition that is congruent with the innate genetic blueprint.

In relation to exercise, Stephenson states that “any part of the body, whether muscles or any other part, requires a certain amount of movement daily, in order to get its share of survival value”. To paraphrase, humans require daily movement and activity stimuli that are congruent with our innate genetic blueprint in

order for the innate genetic blueprint to be able to express homeostatic physiology. This not only mirrors the literature in the most respected physiological journals in the world, it also exactly mirrors the concepts I teach in my programs.

Think of how long ago Stephenson wrote his text and compare the quotes above to the following quotes from a recent article published in *The Journal of Applied Physiology* - the world's leading journal on human physiology.

"We speculate that genes evolved with the expectation of requiring a certain threshold of physical activity for normal physiologic gene expression, and thus habitual exercise in sedentary cultures restores perturbed homeostatic mechanisms towards the normal physiological range."¹

"Exercise induces normal expression of the genome."¹

"Physical inactivity produces an abnormal gene expression and is a direct causal factor of most chronic health conditions by its direct alteration of gene expression from a normal phenotype to a preclinical or clinical phenotype."¹

The more I read the early chiropractic texts the more impressed I become with the genius of our paradigm and those that created and developed it. Much of the early chiropractic writings are truly prophetic and it is incredibly sad that this is not more widely recognised both within and outside the chiropractic profession.

A wellness chiropractic practice must then, to be valid, address both vertebral subluxation complex and genetically congruent lifestyle behaviors. Surely even with reference to vertebral subluxation complex there is a need to address the lifestyle causes and the lifestyle choices that support spinal health in order to provide the best available care. Failing to do so is equivalent to a dentist not mentioning the importance of brushing and flossing teeth and avoiding sugar. Could this not be considered negligent?

I have heard it argued that chiropractors should just refer out to other practitioners for all wellness matters not directly related to vertebral subluxation complex. This is problematic for

several reasons. First, if a chiropractor offers valid lifestyle intervention they will by physiological definition get better results than a chiropractor who does not address such issues.

For example, if a patient who is deficient in EPA/DHA omega 3 fatty acids comes to a chiropractor who has wellness expertise and provides evidence-based lifestyle intervention, they will get informed about the need to supplement and they will get better results in terms of health (and usually symptom) improvements than a patient who is deficient and does not get advice to supplement even if the chiropractic adjustments are exactly the same. This is true for all deficiency and toxicity. How can your patients get the same results as mine if your patients are not getting what they need in terms of nutrients and are more toxic? They can't! For both patient care and practice building reasons it would seem logical to provide the best care possible per unit of time spent with each patient.

Second, the reality is that there is no group of practitioners that we can confidently refer the patients to. No other profession operates within the wellness paradigm and no professionals, including chiropractors, are trained as part of their formal education to assess toxicity and deficiency and purity and sufficiency with respect to all the necessary lifestyle raw materials required for the innate genetic expression of health and homeostasis.

This brings up another interesting question. Is adjusting vertebral subluxation complex and doing nothing else allopathic?

Certainly we can all agree that vertebral subluxation complex represents adaptive (allostatic) physiology. In other words, vertebral subluxation complex represents a stressor, it represents toxicity (tissue changes, nociception) and deficiency (proprioception); it represents an allostatic load. If one focuses entirely on correcting vertebral subluxation complex and does not address the lifestyle factors that are required to promote a healthy neuromusculoskeletal system and prevent future vertebral subluxation complex does this not represent the practice of allopathy?

Understanding the holistic nature of health and homeostasis makes it absurd to think that the neuromusculoskeletal system can remain healthy or become ill independently of the rest of the human ecosystem. The very lifestyle factors that are required for the innate genetic expression of a healthy spine or healthy cells of the spine are the exact lifestyle factors that are required for the genetic expression of health in the rest of the cells, tissues, organs and systems of the human ecosystem.

The 'paradigm of wellness' is based on the premise that health is a natural, innate, genetically programmed state that is inevitable when in a genetically congruent environment. The simple yet so elusive secret to health is to live congruently with your innate genetic lifestyle requirements. The 'science of wellness' is discovering what these innate genetic lifestyle requirements are. This is the very research that I have spent over 25 years compiling and have worked so diligently to make practitioner and patient friendly.

The 'practice of wellness' is taking these concepts and applying them to every patient and arming them with simple, easy lifestyle options that are congruent with their innate genetic blueprint. The research is unequivocal. Those who eat well have healthier cells and better overall health and function and are less likely to develop chronic illness than those who eat poorly. Those who move well have healthier cells and better overall health and function and are less likely to develop chronic illness than those who move poorly. Those who think well have healthier cells and better overall health and function and are less likely to develop chronic illness than those who think poorly.

The evidence supporting the idea that the causes of the current pandemic of chronic illness and the solutions to it are found in lifestyle choices is overwhelming. Wellness experts then must be experts in lifestyle choices that promote the expression of homeostasis.

The world needs us. History, science and clinical experience indicate there is no other viable solution.

I look forward to sharing the research I have compiled and my vision and enthusiasm about evidence-based wellness chiropractors at my upcoming Wellness Certification Program modules and at the Dynamic Growth and Parker Seminars in 2011.

Sincerely,

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1. Booth et al. Waging war on physical inactivity: using modern molecular ammunition against an ancient enemy *J Appl Physiol* 93: 3-30, 2002

2. Roberts, C.K. & Barnard, J.B. Effects of exercise and diet on chronic disease. 2005 *J. Appl Physiol* 98 3-30