

## EDITOR'S NOTE: INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 47

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It is with a blend of pride, humility, and expectation that I am honoured to shepherd the resumption of publication of the *Chiropractic Journal of Australia* after a prolonged hiatus. After submitting hundreds of invitations to prospective authors to submit manuscripts, I am pleased to have assembled a set of papers to run that provides an attractively balanced combination of experimental approaches, commentaries, and historical reviews to broaden one's perspective of chiropractic.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has occupied World Center Stage for over 7 months, opioid use as the second worldwide epidemic and its relation to chiropractic is outlined in this edition by an investigative group headed by Amorin-Woods, Parkin-Smith and Shobbrock. The "opium of the masses" that Karl Marx once made reference to has taken on a new meaning when one witnesses what has happened in the past 30 years with opioids, those natural opium-extracted semi-synthetic and synthetic substances derived from the poppy (*Papaver seminoferum*). While we may look with some degree of gratification upon the disappearance of the notorious opium dens, we should recoil with a dose of reality when we realize that those dens have taken on a more insidious, lethal reincarnation with the alarming statistics telling us that, in the United States for instance, sales of prescription opioids have increased 4-fold from 1999 to 2010 with major increases in deaths and emergency room visits associated with the use of fentanyl, hydrocodone, oxycodone, and other opioid medications. (1) Adding yet further urgency to this problem comes from a cohort study in New South Wales, Australia, which has just revealed that people studied between 2001 and 2018 who were dependent upon opioids had an increased risk of premature death, the deficits being 14.7 and 15.8 years for men and women, respectively.(2) Efforts to curb this runaway situation with opportunities of the chiropractic profession to increase its footprint and fulfil its original calling are described in a pair of articles by the aforementioned authors.

Much of chiropractic's original calling has been amply described in case reports. To that end, Philip Ebrall has provided an invaluable perspective on the importance of case studies, traditionally relegated to the lowest ranks in the pantheon of evidence-based medicine. Not only are there gaps and weaknesses in meta-analyses and randomized clinical trials which traditionally have been placed at the *top* of the pyramid of clinical evidence,(3) but also observational studies as exemplified by case reports provide real-world information in addition to serving as the impetus to conduct clinical trials in the first place.(4) But Ebrall expands well beyond this perspective by applying from Western philosophical sources the qualitative principles of "aboutness" and "consilience" to the preparation of a chiropractic case report, at the same time demonstrating how these tools augment the evidential value of that report.

A pair of narratives by Wiggins and Engel provide important details on the origins of chiropractic, first by refuting the assumption that chiropractic could be regarded as a pseudoscience because of DD Palmer's association with Spiritualism (also true with Louis Pasteur, Thomas Edison, and John Ashburner), and second by probing in detail DD Palmer's treatment of Harvey Lillard, concluding that Palmer most likely adjusted Lillard's fourth thoracic vertebra. At the same time, Wiggins and Engel conclude that the lack of randomized clinical trials or a plausible mechanism meant that the claim that spinal manipulation could resolve deafness is only tenuous, requiring further research.

The final report from Keil and Fludder represents the needed experimental dimension of chiropractic. It presents a deconstruction of factors leading to glenohumeral joint dysfunction in newborns. Consistent with the type of vaginal delivery experienced (occiput anterior, occiput posterior, or breech), theoretical and actual frequencies of right or left glenohumeral joint dysfunctions were shown to correlate in a study of 178 consecutive infants. The purpose of Keil and Fludder's highly detailed review of factors leading to glenohumeral joint dysfunction presented in his paper is to provide criteria that may help to reduce the potential of adverse long-term outcomes, such as persistent, unfavourable behaviour.

Just as multiple types of study have been shown to facilitate our grasping of the full meaning of evidence-based medicine,(5), so do we welcome the varied perspectives offered in this and forthcoming editions of the *Chiropractic Journal of Australia* to appreciate the broader meaning and implications of chiropractic.

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