

Dr. Bruce H. Dohner explains chiropractic medicine to Nurse Lorna Simmons Nolt: natural method of health care, no medicine

by Lorna S. Nolt, R.N.

Can chiropractic medicine become an integral, useful, accepted part of the medical profession as a whole? Can a reporter who is also a registered nurse feel comfortable accepting chiropractic medicine as a needed, functional part of the treatment of the illnesses of the human body?

In other words, does chiropractic work?

Yes, says Bruce H. Dohner, a young, enthusiastic doctor of chiropractic with a busy office in Mount Joy. And yes, says this previously skeptical and questioning registered nurse, also of Mount Joy.

Several hours of questions and several hours of informed and intelligent answers later: the answer is a definitive yes.

Okay. It has a place in the organized web of medical techniques. Now, what exactly is chiropractic? What kinds of medical problems can it help? And how does it work?

Settling down over morning cups of tea and coffee in his comfortable office on Main Street, Dr. Dohner explains to the still-doubting nurse:

"First of all, chiropractic is a natural method of health care," he says, with emphasis on the word "natural." "Instead of prescribing medications, we adjust, mechanically and structurally, any derangements of the spine which could be causing the problem that has sent the patient to a doctor."

The vertebrae, or the bony cage-like, elongated series of structures we call the backbone, protects the vulnerable and important nerves which come from the brain and travel through the encasing, protective spinal column, branching off at intervals to supply impulses to every organ in the body. Injury to the spinal column can result, for example, in paralysis of an arm or leg or interruption of the electrical messages the brain is constantly sending to each internal organ. In addition, any misalignment any place along the line of the backbone can cause a bony vertebra or intervertebral disc to press on or constrict these important message-carrying nerve bundles. Common results are pain in the lower back and the possibility of migraine headaches and other functional disorders that involve the body's organs and internal glands.

"All the nerves leading to all parts of the body pass through the cervical, or neck area," Dr. Dohner continues. "By correcting any mechanical misalignment of any of the cervical vertebrae we can keep it in the proper, natural alignment and thus reduce the irritation on the nerves—what we call sub-



Dr. Bruce H. Dohner

luxation. Ninety per cent of all spinal mechanical problems are primarily in the neck, with secondary effects or symptoms along the spine, so in my practice I concentrate on neck, or cervical alignment."

Cervical alignment. What exactly is that?

"Our system of spinal care is based on the cervical portion of the spine and the ramifications that area has on the rest of the body," Dr. Dohner explains. "The cervical region has to have more mobility, more turning and stretching ability, than any other part of the spine. It has given up stability for mobility, and thus is the most complex and the most subject to misalignment. Since it is such a complex area, encasing such a large number of nerves, there is more of a chance for something to go wrong. The majority of spinal misalignments occur in the neck."

The outer portion of the brain stem (that area just above the neck at the base of the skull) houses reticular (or intricate) formations that perform hundreds of functions. "One of the most important of these functions," Dr. Dohner says, "is mediating the system that controls nerve impulses to the muscle spindles, which in turn regulate the tenacity (or holding together) of the entire spinal musculature. An injury to the brain stem will interfere with nerve impulses to the muscles in the spinal area and cause an imbalance of nerve impulses to one side or another. This results in pelvic imbalance, or a tipping of the pelvis to one side or the other, and a shorter leg on one side. We can measure this in degrees."

Dr. Dohner leans forward to make a point. "My job," he says with conviction, "is to determine if a patient has a spinal problem and then determine if it is related to the problem he came through the door with. Only then do we get down to the business of treatment."

How does he go about the business of treatment?

First of all, a patient history which may include family history, dietary habits, and questions about previous health care. Next, a physical examination, and, depending on whether he feels there is a need, laboratory and x-ray analyses. Then, a careful spinal examination to detect any structural imbalances which may be contributing to the symptoms, and, in many cases, specific spinal and/or cervical x-rays.

"I have the best equipment anywhere for taking cervical x-rays," Bruce Dohner says proudly. "My equipment was made for and is especially geared to taking the quality cervical x-rays I need to determine cervical misalignments." Then, development of the films and Dr. Dohner's careful measurements and calculations to determine the degree, if any, of misalignment. Pulling a film from a drawer of his x-ray filing cabinet, he puts it over a lighted background and explains in more detail the numbered notations and crisscrossing lines.

And then what? What about this "adjustment" we've been hearing about? Is that next?

Well, not quite. After Dr. Dohner determines the presence, type, and amount of cervical misalignment by all of the aforementioned techniques, the next step is the proper and very careful positioning of the patient on the specially-designed treatment table. "Setting the patient up properly, with the correct alignment of the spinal column on the table, is 90% of the treatment. The

success of the actual physical adjustment depends entirely on that."

The adjustment is usually given by hand and consists of the application of pressure, using specialized techniques, to that area or areas of the spine which Dr. Dohner has determined to be out of alignment.

Is one adjustment usually enough?

"It's one thing to correct a cervical misalignment," he says, "and free the patient from the symptoms he's been having. It's quite another to retain the correction, for some patients that is."

And hereby enters the crux of the theory of chiropractic medicine: the definition of chiropractic as a natural method of health care. And Dr. Bruce

Dohner's frustration with man's chronic inattention to care of his body: his health.

"Sometimes there has already been irreversible damage to a nerve or disc," he emphasizes. "I can

correct the problem with an adjustment, but the patient's well-rehearsed life style won't allow his spine to retain the correction. One of my basic concerns is that I wish I could see asympto-

matic people, catch them before the symptoms develop, help them to develop a lifestyle that leads to fewer and less severe health problems.

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Glen and Diane Haneman have nine children at Messiah Home



Glen and Diane Haneman

by
Cherie Dillow

"What can I do?" Mother's everywhere have heard this statement at least a dozen times each summer. Most of us, however, have only a few children and can manage to make it until school starts again in September.

Glen and Diane Haneman happen to have nine children, three boys and six girls—the Haneman's are houseparents at the Messiah Children's Home, Union School Road, Mount Joy. They are new to the Mount Joy area, although both are former Lancaster County residents.

Glen and Diane have been married for five years and have spent all their married years acting as parents, sharing and giving time and more importantly, love.

Diane and Glen are in their early twenties and after getting married, they decided to look for youth camp work. They happened to learn of a position as houseparents in Wahkon, Minnesota at the Galloway Boy's Ranch, where they worked and parented for one year. They returned east and took a job at the New Life Homes—Snell Farm in Bath, New York. At both of these homes the Haneman's

were house parents of boys from the ages of twelve to eighteen. Many of the boys were sent to the homes by the courts and many were boys in trouble. Mrs. Haneman said, "it was difficult at times because they were young too, and their authority came hard."

Their move to Mount Joy was especially exciting because they are once again in Lancaster Co. and Mrs. Haneman said, "it is fun having girls for the first time to care for." These young people were mostly referred through social services.

Diane's day is much like any other mother, she feeds them breakfast and lunch and does the washing and other household tasks. Through the week there is a cook to prepare the dinner and other ladies to help out occasionally. On the week-ends Diane takes charge of all the meals. The children care for their rooms and have chores and responsibilities. Mr. Haneman does house maintenance, helps with the children and runs the children to their various activities around town.

Not only do the Hanemans share the house chores but they do the parenting, the sharing of their time with these

children when they need to talk, have a problem, or just need a little extra love! The home furnishes help for household cooking, and for them to have time off, but more importantly, it gives them more time to be a caring couple, better able to parent.

And as many parents know, there are good times and bad times. She spoke of one of their former homes, about a child who ran away, unhappy with the home. When he was returned, they had to begin the rebuilding of trust. She added, "sometimes it's hard, but it's worth it to make them secure and loved."

When asked about the holiday season, they felt that at those times especially, it seemed to be the most trying times. She told of a little boy who went to his own home for the Thanksgiving Holiday and came back to the children's home. She learned he was disappointed because his turkey dinner turned out to be bologna sandwiches.

They aren't sure how long they will continue to parent in this fashion, but Mrs. Haneman beamed as she said, "they're still going strong, really enjoying every minute."