

# Yesterday, when I was young

Charles Blum

## The beginning

**A** bit of history from my personal perspective: When I was in chiropractic college and then starting my practice in the late 1970s it was a profound time of change in chiropractic. The chiropractic colleges' accrediting agency, the Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE), was coming into power and all the colleges were rushing to satisfy their requirements in an effort to get accredited.

At that time Sacro Occipital Technique (SOT) and chiropractic was in a period of significant clinical growth, creativity, and expansion. There weren't many restrictions on what chiropractors could say or types of patients they could treat. The doctors really didn't understand evidence based care or research and would often proclaim that what they were teaching or doing was fully researched. Ultimately what they meant was they tried it in their clinic and it seemed to work for their patients, that was what 'fully researched' meant to them.

The real difficulty was they were coming up with novel, fascinating, and clinically meaningful therapeutic applications along with wild, irresponsible claims. New doctors and students had no way of really figuring out which was which so they would try a procedure and see for themselves.

By 1980 the colleges, academicians, and researchers started to vet the claims of many of the chiropractic 'gurus' and teachers and found their evidence weak at best whereas their claims were very strong. This began the current evidence based era of chiropractic, where every claim is studied for supportive bench research and the experiences of clinical practitioners are mostly discounted.

At chiropractic research conferences the academicians seem to revel in disembodiment the depth and breath of what chiropractic used to be. They want chiropractic to be only gross mobilisations, myofascial work (e.g., ART, Graston, etc), and rehabilitative exercises; all for only treating head, neck and low back pain.

## The ending?

Attempts are being made to actively eliminate from our repertoire treatments of whole body kinematics, non-musculoskeletal presentations, neurological interrelationships, cranial spinal affects, visceral dysfunction, etc.

Witness the clamour of the World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC) and our research agencies to let everyone know how chiropractic has no effect on the immune system. I am not saying we

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can cure patients of COVID-19, but it is clear that at least with a subset of patients we can do things to improve their immune response.

In turn this has left the current generation with what seems like a sterilised version of chiropractic, essentially a variant of a doctor of physical therapy. All the magic and creativity of chiropractic seems stifled in an attempt to have responsible instructors and supportive evidence based information.

What makes chiropractic different than physical therapy or manual medicine is our novel chiropractic technique systems. Currently there are powerful factions in our chiropractic research and academic communities that are seeking to eliminate our chiropractic technique systems. These factions are doing this under the presumption that technique systems are led by technique gurus who are duping the chiropractic practitioners to benefit financially from their naiveté.

There is a double standard regarding technique system research; if the research academic community 'like' a portion of a chiropractic technique system they will pick out bits and pieces and enable colleges to create their own technique package. However these purportedly '*evidence based technique packages*' have much less evidence than our historical chiropractic technique systems. While there is no doubt that our technique systems warrant greater study and further research, that is no reason to ignore their history and the research they have already produced.

The presumption by some of our research and academic communities is that chiropractic students and doctors are not interested in technique 'systems'. Most of the time however this has been how their interests have been fostered and (mis)directed. Ironically while the research and academic communities are attempting to eliminate chiropractic technique systems, conversely they are up in arms if any chiropractic technique attempts to teach chiropractic technique systems to osteopaths, naturopaths, acupuncturists, and other allied healthcare practitioners.

Even so, with all of these efforts to reduce interest in chiropractic technique systems (prescriptive chiropractic techniques) (1), current studies have found that chiropractic students are still interested in learning chiropractic technique systems.

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*Cite:* Blum C. Yesterday when I was young [Reflection]. Asia-Pac Chiropr J. 2020;1:025 URL [https://www.apcj.net/site\\_files/4725/upload\\_files/BlumYesterdaywhenIwasyoung.pdf?dl=1](https://www.apcj.net/site_files/4725/upload_files/BlumYesterdaywhenIwasyoung.pdf?dl=1)

## Reference

1. Demortier, M., Goncalves, G., Leboeuf-Yde, C. et al. Attitudes to functional neurology and some other 'prescriptive' chiropractic techniques and their associations with chiropractic conservatism: a cross-sectional survey of chiropractic students. Chiropr Man Therap. 2020;28:28 DOI <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12998-020-00308-7>