

Profile



W Mark Erwin, BA, DC

Dr. Erwin is a cum laude graduate of York University (1980), and CMCC (1984) and has practiced in Toronto since graduation. Always interested in research (he was selected for the FCCS programme upon graduation) Dr. Erwin was most impressed by the excellence of much of the work emerging from CMCC's residency programme and of the multidisciplinary nature of the Saskatoon experience. During his clinical practice years in Toronto, Dr. Erwin encountered a particular worker's compensation case of 'atypical chest and back pain' that proved to be a pivotal encounter. The patient in question had suffered intractable back and chest pain and responded so dramati-

cally to spinal manipulation that Dr. Erwin decided to investigate this curious clinical syndrome; the smoldering interest in research was re-kindled, and thus began the struggle and metamorphosis from private practitioner into a clinical scientist.

Exploring new ground and with the solid support of CMCC, Dr. Erwin and Patrick Jackson (PhD, neuroscience) were awarded a grant by CFSR to investigate the costovertebral joint for its' potential to cause pain. The kind assistance of a number of physicians and technologists at the Toronto General and Mt. Sinai hospitals allowed Dr. Erwin access to the pathology and autopsy service where he obtained and processed the human tissues necessary for the study. Dr. Erwin and Jackson have now published a paper detailing an immunocytochemical analysis of human costovertebral joint innervation. This paper has shed new light regarding possible mechanisms of pain conveyed by the costovertebral articulation and a rationale for spinal manipulation as an effective therapy. "The innervation of human costovertebral joints; Implications in clinical back pain syndromes" is currently in press (JMPT) and Dr. Erwin, along with colleagues at the Texas Back Institute (TBI) has co-authored a series of case reports of costovertebral syndrome published in Topics in Clinical Chiropractic. In addition to numerous lectures in and around Toronto, he has presented at neuroscience rounds at TBI, and in May of 1999 delivered a platform presentation at the World Chiropractic Congress and Conference in Auckland, New Zealand.

A pivotal and timely moment in Dr. Erwin's career occurred in the spring of 1996 when he received an invitation to move his practice to "King's Health Centre", a new, multi-disciplinary clinic in downtown Toronto. After some deliberation, he decided to move to King's and embrace the notion of working 'outside of the box' but within the 8 floors of a multi-disciplinary, exciting new opportunity ... and he's never looked back. Dr. Erwin has found a home at King's Health Centre where some 130 full

or part-time clinicians continually strive to provide the best care for patients in a seamless, collegial and state of the art atmosphere. Dr. Erwin is proud to provide a portal of entry for Chiropractic management of patients within King's that has helped educate his colleagues about the opportunities that Chiropractic management can provide as well as to allow his patients speedy access to a broad array of allied health care.

In September of 1997, once sufficiently infected with the research bug, Dr. Erwin began graduate studies in the Master of Science programme at the Institute of Medical Science at the University of Toronto. In the summer of 1999 Dr. Erwin completed transfer examinations and entered the doctor of Philosophy programme also at the University of Toronto and Toronto Western Hospital where his research interest concerns the physiology of the intervertebral disc. *Specifically, Dr. Erwin is investigating the production of proteoglycan by nucleus pulposus chondrocytes and various aspects of cell signaling. This research is essential to enhancing our understanding of degenerative disc disease and the pathophysiology of this process. Knowledge gained from Dr. Erwin's work may enhance our approach to disorders of the degenerative disc. Possible outcomes from Dr. Erwin's work may include novel future treatment strategies as well as improving our understanding of the role of manipulative and other treatment approaches to patients suffering from degenerative disc disease.*

In the autumn of 1999, Dr. Erwin was awarded a Connaught scholarship from the University of Toronto and the Institute of Medical Science "Merit award" for graduate academic achievement. Dr. Erwin is particularly proud of also being awarded a "first colour" award by the Univer-

sity of Toronto for athletic and academic achievement. In 1998 while in the second year of graduate studies and at the tender age of 41, Dr. Erwin decided to use his fifth and final year of eligibility in intercollegiate athletics ... **20 years** after winning two national titles in swimming as an undergraduate. One coach remarked that Dr. Erwin was racing against athletes who could be his children.

One of the many benefits Dr. Erwin enjoys as part of his graduate studies is the opportunity to participate in weekly spine and bi-weekly rheumatology rounds at the Toronto Western Hospital. The ability to interact with colleagues from other disciplines helps to break down traditional barriers, improve communication and encourage patient referrals.

Dr. Erwin was recently asked to manage the physical medicine component of the cast of the "Lion King" theatrical production in Toronto. In order to manage the health of a group of performers with diverse interests and needs, he has assembled a multidisciplinary team of physicians, podiatrists, physical therapists, massage therapists and kinesiologists.

Dr. Erwin's team of professionals provides a comprehensive and quantifiable assessment as well as treatment that is outcome based and specifically tailored for each performer and their particular needs. The goal of the programme is to reduce the incidence of injury and associated costs.

Dr. Erwin's vision of the future is one where Chiropractors, validated by rigorous scientific scrutiny and common sense will be widely accepted to perform an integral role in the multi-disciplinary care of non-surgical spinal pain and related conditions.

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