

## Report from the Second Annual Meeting of the Chiropractic Research Journal Editor's Council

In April of 1991, the Chiropractic Research Journal Editor's Council (CRJEC) met for the second time. It is the purpose of this report to bring to the attention of the chiropractic profession, through a report in all members journals, the topics debated and motions made from that meeting. Members attending this meeting included Dr. Thomas Bergmann (Journal of Chiropractic Technique), Dr. Mary Ann Chance (Chiropractic Journal of Australia), Mr. Russell Gibbons (Chiropractic History), Dr. Bruce Gunderson (DC Tracts), Dr. Robert Hazel (Chiropractic Sports Medicine), Dr. Grace Jacobs (Journal of Chiropractic Education), Dr. Dana J. Lawrence (Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics), Dr. Silvano Mior (Journal of the Canadian Chiropractic Association), and Dr. Robert Wagon (Chiropractic: The Journal of Clinical Investigation and Research). Not attending were Dr. John Grostic (Chiropractic Research Journal) and Dr. Simon Leyson (European Journal of Chiropractic). Also attending, as non-voting participants were Mr. Donald Peterson (Dynamic Chiropractic) and Dr. Steven Wolk (Director of Research for the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research).

Six items comprised the agenda for the meeting:

- 1 Development of indexing terms for the chiropractic profession;
- 2 Index and database usage;
- 3 Standard setting among journal editors;
- 4 Structured abstracts;
- 5 Ethics and policy in scientific publication;
- 6 Focus group with the Corporate Health Policies Group (CHPG).

### Development of indexing terms

While the Medical Subjects Headings (MeSH) list provides the only indexing terms utilized by Index Medicus, and represents a standard for use, it fails to recognize many specific chiropractic key terms such as "subluxation" or "manipulation". Within the chiropractic profession, several indexing groups are currently culling chiropractic literature to develop computerized databases for chiropractic usage. The CRJEC fears that a problem is being created because these groups, which include the Chiropractic Library Consortium (CLIBCON), the Chiropractic Research Abstracts Collection (CRAC) and the Chiropractic Literature Analysis and Retrieval System (CHIROLARS) may have developed lists of indexing terms different from one another. It is ultimately the editors who determine what exact non-MeSH terms are selected for publication, yet we may fail in selecting a term recognized by one of the groups, thus resulting in loss of the paper on the database at worst, or causing the indexer extra work at best. It is the desire of the CRJEC to see one standardized set of non-MeSH indexing terms be created, a Chiropractic Subject Headings list (ChirSH).

To do so will necessarily require coordination between the CRJEC and the different indexing groups. Though the meeting will have already been held by the time of publication of this report, the CRJEC moved that the CRJEC send a representative

to the annual meeting of CLIBCON and CHIROLARS with the FCER providing support. The CRJEC also recommends that a representative from CRAC attend this meeting. This motion passed unanimously. To create dialogue, the CRJEC also moved that the CRJEC extend an invitation to representatives from CLIBCON, CRAC, CHIROLARS and ACARIS (an Australian indexing body) to attend the next CRJEC annual meeting as non-voting participants. This motion passed unanimously.

It is the desire of the CRJEC to see that ChirSH is created. This will provide guidance to the CRJEC in decision-making regarding indexing terms, as well as standardize the listings used by the various indexes within our profession. It will also help with incorporation of a chiropractic subdatabase into the Index Medicus system, should that come to pass.

### Index and database usage

At the last meeting of the CRJEC, information was disseminated concerning the attempts of one member journal to gain indexing status through Index Medicus. In rejection of that application, the indexing agency claimed that the rejection was due in part to the criticism that chiropractors do not use or subscribe to the database in numbers sufficient to warrant their inclusion, and that chiropractors traditionally did not cite their own literature. The CRJEC is well aware of the importance of indexing our publications, and our previous report<sup>1</sup> listed current status for member journals. Still, only the JMPT has status with Index Medicus, and the CRJEC feels it necessary to counter that criticism in attempting to improve the number of journals indexed.

In recognition of the criticism, the CRJEC moved that each CRJEC member journal editor will track all chiropractic citations for the volume year 1990, to share with all other members. All such information will be forwarded to Dr. Lawrence by August 1, 1991 for publication within the pages of JMPT. This motion passed unanimously.

### Standard setting

A variety of topics concerning standards were debated.

**1 Statistics:** what are appropriate statistics? The CRJEC feels that descriptive statistics are not sufficient for publication of research. P values alone are not enough, and we recommend that confidence intervals be published. In all cases, the most appropriate statistics must be used; the type will vary upon the design of the research.

**2 Key Indexing Terms:** as noted above, some concerns exist with respect to appropriate key terms. Editors will remain free to choose those they feel appropriate until coordination between editors and indexers occurs. We do recommend the use of MeSH terms where possible, but also recognize the need to use non-MeSH terms. For journals that mix both types, we recommend that they be listed separately after the abstract, and so identified as MeSH or non-MeSH.

**3 Authorship Requirements:** authorship requirements are spelled out in the "Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submit-



ted to Biomechanical Journals" accord.<sup>2</sup> The editors support those specific requirements.

**4 Acknowledgements:** the "Uniform Requirements"<sup>2</sup> also specifies requirements for acknowledgements. The CRJEC emphasizes that all published acknowledgements must be accompanied by a written release from anyone acknowledge in a paper in recognition that it is possible to acknowledge someone who disagrees with the work or who did not contribute to it.

**5 Conflicts of Interest:** a great deal of debate occurred on when an editor should inform readers of the journal of a potential conflict. In general, the CRJEC recommends that the reader be made aware of such conflicts, so as to best allow the reader to judge the work. Here, the CRJEC refers to research performed by individuals with financial stake in the work being done. The debate centered on whether good science alone is sufficient; if a paper can clear all hurdles on its science, is it necessary to inform the reader of the financial issue. There is not yet a consensus on this issue, and so debate will continue.

**6 Advertising:** advertising in journals is generally not subject to the same type of peer review that the papers undergo. All editors are free to accept or reject any advertising copy. In order to provide some guidance to editors and advertisers, the CRJEC moved that an International Advertising Advisory Committee be formed to develop standards for advertisement submitted to chiropractic journals. This motion passed unanimously.

**7 Reviews of the Literature:** the CRJEC notes that all reviews of the literature should provide information concerning how the literature was searched, which databases were consulted, and what key terms were used. The CRJEC also recommends that reviews must synthesize that literature and provide a new perspective on the past research; it should not simply be a report of who did what.

### Structured abstracts

The structured abstract has been adopted by several biomedical journals in an attempt to provide greater clarity in abstracts.<sup>3,4</sup> The CRJEC discussed adopting this form of abstract for research reports and reviews of literature. No consensus was reached on whether the structured abstract should be adopted as a standard; each journal may feel free to use it if they so desire.

### Ethics and policy in scientific publication

A short discussion concerning a book on this topic ensued.<sup>5</sup> The book looks at ethical issues in publication and lays out recommendations for the resolution of a variety of problems confronting editors. The recommendations may, in large measure, be adopted by the CRJEC.

### Corporate health policies group

A focus group meeting with the CHPG was held to get perspectives from the editors toward the directions that chiropractic research should take for the future. The CHPG has been working with the FCER to investigate federal and other funding for chiropractic research. Input from the CRJEC can help determine

what areas of investigation merit further study; also, the CRJEC may help in providing input on current directions in chiropractic research.

### Conclusion

To conclude the meeting, a motion was made that at the beginning of the next annual meeting, a secretary will be appointed who will take notes of the meeting and will prepare the report from it. This passed unanimously. Dr. Silvano Mior was nominated and elected chair for the next meeting.

These reports from CRJEC will keep the profession informed concerning decisions affecting submissions of papers and publication thereof.

### References

- 1 Chiropractic Research Journal Editor's Council. Report from the Chiropractic Research Journal Editor's Council. JCCA 1991; 35(1):11-12.
- 2 International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. Ann Intern Med 1988; 108:258-265.
- 3 Squires BP. Structured abstracts of original research and review articles. Can Med Assoc J 1990; 143:619-622.
- 4 Haynes RB, Mulrow CD, Huth EJ et al. More informative abstracts revisited. Ann Intern Med 1990; 113:69-76.
- 5 Council of Biology Editors. Ethics and policy in scientific publication. Bethesda, MD: Council of Biology Editors, Inc. 1991.



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