

Patient's plight draws response

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SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

The case of Linda Solsbury, described in detail in a story on this page, was determined by the court to have been caused by chiropractic manipulation.

It was reported that X-rays showed a dissecting tear in her left vertebral artery, lying alongside the cervical vertebrae, and subsequently closing the basilar artery. This caused a massive stroke of the rear part of the brain called the brain stem.

The chiropractor, Thomas B. Goulding, D.C., denied that he caused the stroke or that chiropractic treatment causes strokes.

However, at the trial, reports of a series of cases of such strokes were presented. The largest report cited 25 such cases, and was written by Dr. Thomas Mehalic of Southern Illinois Medical School.

It is difficult to know the story of Linda Solsbury and not feel sad and upset.

Chiropractic was started about 100 years ago by D.D. Palmer, a grocer and fish vendor. As described in the Connecticut licensure provision, chiropractic is an unproven theory that there is a "subluxation" of the spinal vertebrae, and this presses on a nerve interfering with the flow of energy to various organs causing disease. Manipulative adjustments of such "subluxations" are claimed to relieve pressure and treat disease.

Chiropractic has been challenged by such persons as the former editor of the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine to prove this theory scientifically or to stop claiming it is a fact. Despite the passage of 100 years and the latest CAT scanning and other imaging techniques, surgery or autopsies, scientific proof still appears to be lacking.

The National Institute of Health has now set up an Office of Alternative Health Care, funded by Congress, to investigate and research "unorthodox medicine." It will be interesting to see whether chiropractic and other alternative care will be barred or not in the same manner the Food and Drug Administration approves or disapproves of medications.