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Forbes Article on Chiropractic Reveals Deep Seated Ignorance

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Self described pseudoscience critic, Steven Salzberg published a hit piece on chiropractic in Forbes online titled: *New Medicare Data Reveal Startling \$496 Million Wasted On Chiropractors*. His blog post asserts that chiropractic is a waste of money, causes strokes and that there is no scientific basis for vertebral subluxations. We are hesitant to even address Mr. Salzberg's blog post considering that he provides no basis for his claims, but since the post has garnered attention within chiropractic we will briefly address his ridiculous statements.

In regards to his concerns about how much money is spent on chiropractic we simply point out that over the past 20 plus years numerous studies have been done that demonstrate significant cost savings with chiropractic utilization. These include several workers compensation studies, research involving the care of the elderly and research regarding costs savings in insurance plans where chiropractors are the gatekeepers.

On the issue of stroke, the fact is there is no human experimental evidence that chiropractic adjustments or neck manipulations are causally related to strokes. Since there is no human experimental evidence that chiropractic adjustments or neck manipulations are causally related to strokes, suggesting that such a risk exists is poor public health practice.

In regards to vertebral subluxation the facts are that there is tremendous profession-wide support that exists for the term, it is accepted by those outside the profession, there are peer-reviewed, scientific publications in support of the concept, internationally accepted guidelines, and books from major medical publishers. The notion that there is no scientific basis for it reveals such a deep level of ignorance that the only conclusion to be drawn is that it is simply an act of denialism. Denialism involves choosing to deny reality as a way to avoid an uncomfortable truth. Author Paul O'Shea remarks, "[It] is the refusal to accept an empirically verifiable reality. It is an essentially irrational action that withholds validation of a historical experience or event." This is simply an ideological position whereby one systematically reacts by refusing reality and truth. The Wikipedia entry notes that "individuals or groups who reject propositions on which a scientific or scholarly consensus exists can engage in denialism when they use rhetorical tactics to give the appearance of argument or legitimate debate, when in actuality there is none."

Salzberg's blog post will no doubt receive many comments and a large number of hits due to social media and the outrage he caused within the profession. But no matter how many "Likes" are achieved, this will not hide the simple fact that his article is a fit of logical fallacies, unsubstantiated conjecture, political rhetoric, and denialism – nothing more.