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Lincoln Endowed Chair in Chiropractic Research Annual Update

By John Mayer, D.C., Ph.D., Lincoln College Endowed Chair, University of South Florida

The past year was a banner year for the chiropractic research program at the University of South Florida (USF). As we complete our fourth year at USF, it is important to emphasize the uniqueness of this research initiative and the resulting opportunities for the chiropractic profession. The Lincoln Chair's research program at USF remains the only endowed chiropractic research program within a college of medicine in the United States. USF is a Carnegie Tier I "very high research activity" university and was recently ranked as the fastest growing university in federal research funding between 2000-2007. This cooperative arrangement between the chiropractic profession and a top tier public university has pro-

vided unparalleled opportunities for the advancement of chiropractic research within an integrative and interdisciplinary setting. Some of the major accomplishments for this program over the past year are highlighted below.

Research

A current focus of the Lincoln Chair's research efforts is testing and implementing targeted exercise interventions designed to reduce risk of low back injury in first responders and military personnel. Data collection for the competitive federal research grant, "Low back injury prevention in firefighters," has been successfully initiated and is currently underway. This grant was funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, Fire Prevention & Safety grants and is the first grant awarded under this mecha-

nism to a Doctor of Chiropractic (Principal Investigator: John Mayer, DC, PhD). The partner fire department for this grant is Tampa Fire Rescue, FL. The research is the first phase of a research agenda designed to assess the effectiveness of a targeted physical exercise approach to reduce the risk of back injury in those individuals who protect our community. Results are expected by early 2012.

The Lincoln Chair's research program is also integrally involved with one of two signature projects of USF's "Musculoskeletal Interdisciplinary Research Initiative," which is funded by the US Department of Defense (DOD). This project, "Reduction of Risk for Low Back Injury in Theater of Operations" (Principal Investigator: William S. Quillen, PT, PhD; Co-Principal Investigator: John Mayer, DC, PhD), studies a high intensity exer-

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cise approach for soldiers at a domestic US Army base. It is an important component of USF's expanding research agenda aimed at helping our active duty military personnel and veterans, and complements other DOD-related research efforts carried out by the chiropractic profession. Data collection for this project is expected to begin by early 2012.

Findings of past research projects were disseminated by the Lincoln Chair through recent presentations and publications, such as:

- Keynote presentation at the New York Chiropractic College 2001 Annual Research Symposium titled, "Evidence based management of low back pain."
- Invited presentation at the Veterans Health Administration, Chiropractic Service 6th Annual Meeting titled, "Exercise therapy for low back pain: a review of the evidence."
- Presentation at the 2011 Association of Chiropractic Colleges - Research Agenda Conference titled, "Complementary and alternative medicine for neuropathic pain: a literature review."
- Task Force Member of "Contemporary Concepts in Manipulation, Mobilization, and Massage for Spinal Pain Disorders" for the North American Spine Society, which resulted in the seminal publication: Dagenais S, Gay R, Tricco A, Freeman MD, Mayer J. North American Spine Society contemporary concepts in spine care: spinal manipulation therapy for acute low back pain. The Spine Journal 2010;10(10):918-40.

Teaching, Service and Outreach

In addition to these research efforts, the Lincoln Chair has also made inroads and is currently engaged in teaching, service, and outreach projects, such as:

- Instructing USF medical students in their primary care clerkship on management of low back pain, which stresses a multidisciplinary approach including chiropractic care.
- Implementing the Lincoln Research Prize in Chiropractic and Biomechanics as the largest prize for current research in chiropractic and biome-

chanics, along with the sponsors of the Prize: Florida Chiropractic Foundation for Education and Research, Florida Chiropractic Association, and the Lincoln College Education and Research Fund. The Inaugural Lincoln Research Prize will be awarded to an exceptional chiropractic researcher at the 2011 FCA National Convention.

- Serving on several key committees within USF, such as the USF Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research, and the research sub-committee of the College of Medicine Executive Committee on Research and Education.
- Establishing USF as a collaborating institution with World Spine Care - a not-for-profit, organization dedicated to providing evidence-based prevention, treatment, and education to those suffering from spine conditions in underserved regions of the world.

The Future

As evidenced by the milestones described above, the chiropractic research program at USF is now firmly established. Future growth of the program as it pursues chiropractic research excellence depends on major infrastructure advancements and the addition of key personnel. Thus, this growth ultimately depends on continued support from the chiropractic community and recurrent extramural research grants. We are thankful for your support, and are especially grateful to the individuals and organizations who dedicated themselves for several years to establishing the USF chiropractic research program through their determination, diligence, and passion for the chiropractic profession. ◀FCA

Dr. Mayer is the Lincoln College Endowed Chair in Biomechanical and Chiropractic Research, and a tenured faculty member in the College of Medicine of University of South Florida. Dr. Mayer is the principal investigator and co-principal investigator on federally-funded, injury prevention research projects. He is instructor for the Health Promotion and Wellness, Critical Inquiry 3, and Primary Care Clerkship-Low Back Pain graduate courses at the USF College of Medicine. He serves as a manuscript reviewer for several scientific journals and advisory board member for various health and research organization. He is also an honorary member of the Florida Chiropractic Association."

