

The Miami Herald

YEAR, No. 196 THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 2001 ▶ FINAL EDITION 35 Cents For home delivery, call 305.350-2000
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HEALTH

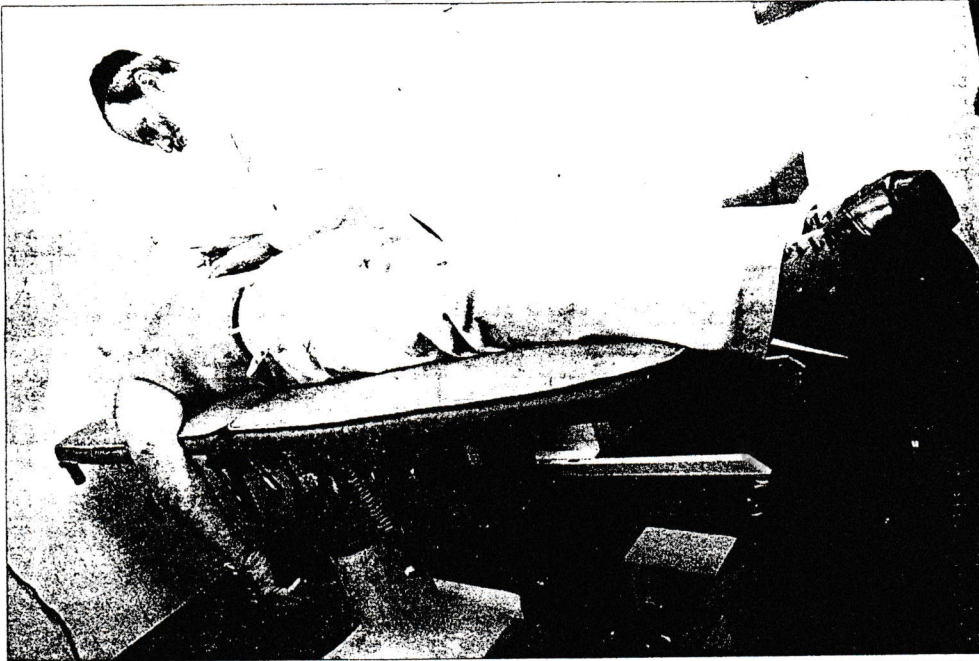
Device helps a treatment of addicts

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Patients in a residential drug-addiction program who received treatments with a chiropractic device that aligned their vertebrae completed a treatment program at a remarkable 100 percent rate.

They also made fewer visits to a nurses' station and showed significant increases in anxiety, according to a recently published study by a Miami Beach chiropractor and a University of Miami biostatistician. Ninety-eight patients at Miami's Exodus drug-treatment program participated in the study featured in *Molecular Psychiatry*.

▶ PLEASE SEE ADDICTS, 3E



PHOTOS BY CARL JUSTE/HERALD STAFF

HANDY DEVICE: Dr. Jay Holder's chiropractic treatment, above and below, repositions vertebrae that are interfering with the function of nerves along the spinal column.

- ▶ **EXERCISE WITH MINNA LESSIG, 3E.**
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Chiropractic device aids addicts' treatment

▶ ADDICTS, FROM 1E

Nature magazine.

Completing a 28- to 30-day program greatly enhances an addict's chances of staying clean, but nationally only 72 percent of participants make it all the way through such programs, said Jay Holder, medical director of the Exodus program and the chiropractor who conducted the study.

"We're losing a tremendous number of people," Holder said. His chiropractic treatment, using a spring-loaded torque device approved by the Food and Drug Administration, repositions vertebrae that are interfering with the function of nerves along the spinal column, he said.

This correction of what chiropractors call subluxation results in a sense of well-being that allows patients to benefit more thoroughly from the group therapy and medical care of addiction treatment, Holder says.

Because he believes the same principle can help people suffering from depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Holder hopes more studies will follow.

"Chiropractic does not treat addiction — it does not treat any disease," Holder said. "We're allowing those things that treat addiction to be embraced more thoroughly."

Holder has also studied the benefits of ear acupuncture in

addiction treatment, an option offered by Miami-Dade County's drug court. Through acupuncture Holder got to know Dr. Robert C. Duncan, professor of epidemiology and public health at the UM, who has been involved in acupuncture studies funded by the National Institutes of Health. Holder asked Duncan to design the chiropractic study and analyze the results.

The participants were divided into three groups. The first group of 33 got the usual care at the treatment center, including group therapy, psychotherapy and medical care. The second group of 33 got the usual care plus treatments with the spring-loaded torque device, known as an integrator.

A group of 32 got the usual care plus a placebo treatment: The integrator was fired, complete with its clicking sound, but it didn't deliver any force. Only 24 people in the placebo group — 75 percent — completed the treatment program, compared with 56 percent in the usual care group and 100 percent in the chiropractic group.

The number of visits to the nurse showed there was no placebo effect, Holder said. Among those getting the full treatment, only 9 percent visited the nurse, while in the placebo group 56 percent made such visits. "You can't con an addict into believing he's treated," Holder said.

"The major change was in



the anxiety levels — they went down much more dramatically in the active group," Duncan said. "In these kind of treatment facilities, if you make an effort that's successful to reduce anxiety, you can keep people around longer."

Here's how some researchers explain the principle behind the treatment: When a "brain reward cascade" of neurotransmitters, which results in feelings of well-being, is disrupted, the result is reward deficiency syndrome. Drug or alcohol addiction and compulsive disorders can result.

Holder participated in several studies on reward deficiency syndrome, and a possible genetic link, with Dr. Kenneth Blum, formerly of the University of Texas at San Antonio. A gene defect that

predisposes people to reward deficiency syndrome may exist in as much as one-third of the population, Holder and Blum believe.

The defect occurs in a gene normally involved in the flow of dopamine and other neurotransmitters responsible for a sense of well-being, according to research published by Blum and others. When dopamine function is diminished, people may turn to alcohol, drugs or activities that give dopamine and other chemicals a boost.

"We're going to eventually bump into something that makes us feel better," Holder said. What he's looking for is the most effective way to treat those who turn to drugs for that feeling.

Much of chiropractic is done with the doctor's hands. The advantage of a device like the integrator is that the results are reproducible from one practice to another. "The hands are good," Holder said, "but we need to move on."

Parker College of Chiropractic in Dallas and Holder Chiropractic Institute have trained about 3,000 chiropractors in the use of the integrator. The *Molecular Psychiatry* article on Holder's study, which was funded by the Florida Chiropractic Society, called for further research on the benefits of such treatment.

"Will chiropractic get a break now?" Holder asked. "Will there be more studies? "That remains to be seen."



CARL JUSTE / HERALD STAFF

CLICK: Jack Weinstein plays the role of patient as Dr. Jay Holder demonstrates an integrator.

PATIENTS at Miami's Exodus drug-addiction residential program who received treatments with a chiropractic device that realigned their vertebrae completed the treatment program at a remarkable 100 percent rate. 1E



INSIDE

▶ KNIGHT RIDDER