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Amen!

Chiropractic Blasphemy?

By Donald M. Petersen Jr., BS, HCD(hc), FICC(h), Publisher

In the October issue of *The American Journal of Clinical Chiropractic*, publisher Donald Harrison, MS, DC, FICA, tackles the issue of the use of false academic credentials by DCs. This is a problem that needs to be seriously looked at by our profession. Dr. Harrison cites two examples of false credentials in associated articles beginning on his front page. He questions the "PhD" of Ronald Aragona, DC.¹ The other article describes his findings after investigating the "MD," "PhD," "Albert Schweitzer Award," "Knighthood," and "appointment to the faculty, Pharmacology, University of Miami" of Jay Holder, DC.²

In a letter to Dr. Harrison,³ Dr. Aragona states that he received his PhD in "spinal biomechanics" from "Columbia Pacific University" in San Rafael, California. Dr. Harrison, in a response letter, replies: "There is no major university with a PhD in spinal biomechanics." He concludes his response letter with this comment:

"You paid \$4,000, finished four 'homestudy' courses, sent in your own gobbledygook ASBE text for a thesis and got a 'PhD' in the mail. You should be ashamed of yourself for being a mail-order 'PhD.' Take 'PhD' from your credentials before some embarrassment occurs and chiropractic looks bad in the media."

In the article regarding Jay Holder, DC, Dr. Harrison reveals this unsettling finding:

"James D. Potter, PhD, professor and chairman of the Department of Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology at the University of Miami School of Medicine stated that (1) he had never heard of Dr. Jay Holder and (2) the University of Miami was NOT doing any research with him. (Emphasis his.)

"The Sri Lanka Medical Council stated that 'the 'OIU Medical School Columbo, S.L.' listed in Dr.

Holder's resume did not exist (Emphasis his.)

"A colleague determined that there was an 'OUI' in Sri Lanka, but it is called Open International University for complementary medicine, and it is not an accredited medical school.' For an additional fee of \$400-US, outstanding students are awarded an M.D. (which is their abbreviation for Masters Degree) or other degrees such as B.Science, or extra credentials. (Parenthetical comment his.)

"We were told that 'OIU' has additional prizes such as 'the Albert Schweitzer Award and Knighthood' (for an additional fee of \$400-US)." (Parenthetical comment his.)

Unfortunately, Dr. Harrison's articles do not include any response from Dr. Holder. Even so, his investigative effort supports in general several important conclusions.

1. False credentials used by DCs are not only blatant fraud, but an embarrassment to the chiropractic profession, exposing us to warranted ridicule from other professionals and the media.
2. As both Drs. Aragona and Holder teach seminars, our profession must pay attention to the credentials of our seminarists. CCE accredited colleges have a responsibility to investigate all postgraduate degrees presented by those teaching seminars they co-sponsor.
3. Chiropractic state licensing boards need to investigate all degrees presented by those seeking license renewal credit in that state. They should also hold the chiropractic college co-sponsors responsible to do the same.

While it is unclear what effect this may have on seminars already approved for relicensure credit, we believe the use of "false credentials" by seminar instructors should invalidate the seminar. CCE colleges cannot be co-sponsoring seminars where the instructors are sporting "false credentials" from unaccredited institutions.

In the last several years, Dynamic Chiropractic has witnessed a burgeoning plague of unaccredited programs preying on the sometime unwary chiropractor. These organizations have sought to offer MD, PT, and PhD programs to chiropractors in far-flung and unlikely locals from the Caribbean to Moscow. We have turned such advertising away, only to see them sprout in other publications that apparently have no concerns for the

validity of such programs, or for the welfare of doctors who may be well-intended, but get suckered into enrolling in a program "too good to be true," and fork over substantial monies.

But finally, one has to ponder: "Why would any chiropractor attach false academic credentials behind their good name and chiropractic degree?"

- Are some DCs ashamed of being "only" a chiropractor?

- Is this an effort to look better than the DC down the street, and thus attract more patients, albeit under false pretenses?

- Are some just looking to "better" themselves, or entice more doctors to their seminars?

Why anyone would use false credentials, not to mention how they would expect the ruse to go unnoticed or unquestioned, is anybody's guess. A psychiatrist no doubt would come up with some interesting observations on early childhood development or insecurity and inferiority complexes.

My personal opinion is that the use of false credentials as superior to one's chiropractic degree is in essence "chiropractic blasphemy." Blasphemy, the dictionary specifies, is "a contemptuous or profane act, utterance or writing." That is appropriate.

Every time a false credential from a diploma mill sits superior to a DC degree from an accredited chiropractic college, that is chiropractic blasphemy.

References

1. To impress patients and seminar attendees, some DCs pad their credentials with a PhD from a diploma mill. *Amer J Clin Chiro.* Oct. 1995 5(4):1,9.

2. Credentials of one of the members: A bad dream for the "dream team" and the Council on Chiropractic Practice. *Amer J Clin Chiro.* Oct. 1995 5(4):1,5.

3. Letter from Dr. Ronald Aragona. Amer J Clin Chiro. Oct. 1995 5(4):25.

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