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## **Chiropractic and Kirlian Photography -- Viewing the Body's Energy Flow**

By Michael Courtney

Chiropractic philosophy teaches that correction of vertebral subluxation reduces nerve interference and promotes health. Nearly a century of clinical correlation with our patients shows the efficacy of our methods. It has been further taught that the chiropractic adjustment liberates life force (innate) when such subluxation is reduced, thereby allowing the body's own self-regulatory mechanisms to achieve normality. Life force has been described by innumerable technology such as qi, prana, innate, vital force, etc., depending on healing, tradition and culture.

Kirlian photography (aka corona discharge photography or spark electrography) has been shown to demonstrate an electrochemical image of pre- and post-adjustment with definite change in image. Past research in this field correlating homeopathic and acupuncture response has been documented. Terry Tobin, PhD, who was director of research at the former Pasadena College of Chiropractic, did direct some early chiropractic investigation of "The Effect of Spinal Manipulation on Energy Fields in the Fingers as Assessed by Kirlian Photography," as reported in *Chiropractic USA*, April, 1983. Further research evaluating chiropractic response with this modality needs to be done. The potential of Kirlian photographic assessment in chiropractic could be phenomenal. It may be possible to image living tissue with this modality and show a post-treatment response of life force before and after the chiropractic adjustment.

Research has been conducted in the former USSR, and in Germany, China, and the U.S., among other countries, which supports the use of Kirlian photography to measure or assess vital force in living systems, and to evaluate treatment methodology. Kirlian photography is a technique of photographing the electrical discharge from an object when impressed with a high voltage field. It was discovered by Semyon Kirlian in Russia in 1939. The Russians have performed scores of experiments on live plants, animals, and humans with the Kirlian effect.<sup>1</sup> Kirov State University of Kazakhstan has studied the Kirlian effect with electron

microscopy.<sup>1</sup> Supposedly the Kirov scientists saw the living "double" of a living organism in motion. Kirlian photography is best remembered for revealing a leaf which, a portion of it having been cut away, revealed the entire leaf in terms of its aura. This is described as the phantom leaf effect. The Russians observed that the high-frequency discharge seems to imply the existence of an elementary plasma-like constellation made of ionized excited electrons, protons, and perhaps other particles and giving off its own electromagnetic fields and the basis of biological fields.<sup>1</sup> In 1968, Drs. Inyushin, Grishchenko, Vorobev, Shouiski, Fedorova and Gibadulin announced that "all living things -- plants, animals and humans not only have a physical body made of atoms and molecules but also a counterpart body of energy which they termed the Biological Plasma body."<sup>1</sup>

Life force can be conceptualized through the energetic body model. The Germans have been doing research into this and have shown the treatment effect of homeopathy with pre- and post-treatment photographs demonstrating that before treatment the image is aberrant; after treatment, the Kirlian studies demonstrate normality.<sup>2</sup> Dr. M. K. Gaikin, a Leningrad surgeon who studied acupuncture in China, was the first to propose Kirlian photography as a means of demonstrating vital energetics. Thelma Moss and John Hubacher did research with Kirlian photography in 1973 at UCLA. The intent of the UCLA research was to add to the understanding of energy flow and help to confirm the existence of acupuncture points. In 1986, Knapp/Ludwig from Germany presented a lecture at the World Research Foundation Congress of Bioenergetic Medicine dealing with colorplate Kirlian photography and its correlation to disease in humans.<sup>3</sup> Some osteopathic investigation has been noted by John Upledger while at Michigan State University School of Osteopathic Medicine.<sup>4</sup> Chiropractic use of this technology is such that where there is a subluxation there is theorized a decrease or increase of nerve function. This technology may be an avenue to record that nervous aberration at distal areas of the body, i.e. hands and feet. If before the adjustment there is poor or aberrant visualization of a toe or finger and after correction by an adjustment there is a normal image without any aberration, then there has been a change made in this electrochemical image. The life force, being liberated, and the body's homeostasis normalizing the abnormal state through chiropractic can be photographed for all the world to appreciate.

Chiropractic may potentially have a new tool which is not symptom-based but based on an energy model, a life force model, and a model which is supportive of our philosophy. A study performed in 1981 at the California Acupuncture College Clinic showed pre-acupuncture and post-acupuncture effects with Kirlian photography. Pre-chiropractic adjustment and post-adjustment changes have been observed by this writer.

Research with Kirlian photography has been performed by very reputable scientists. Its application to clinical sciences is still very much in its infancy. In the book *High Voltage Photography*, author H.S. Dakin concluded: "... in special cases there are apparent correlations between the shapes and intensity of high voltage photographic images and physiological conditions." An article by Leonard Konikiewicz in *The Journal of Biological Photographic Association* stated: "... now that we have identified the driving force behind corona modulation, the application of Kirlian techniques may become a valuable diagnostic dimension in some clinical applications."

Kirlian photography has been researched for application to diagnostics in cancer. Human breast tumor biopsies performed by Glen Rhine, PhD, at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London in 1985 showed that there is a difference between malignant breast tissue and normal biopsy tissue.<sup>5</sup> In Greece, Kirlian color photography has been shown to be a useful tool in diagnosis of psychopathology.<sup>6</sup> Omura's research published in 1978 in *The International Journal of Acupuncture and Electrotherapeutics Research*<sup>7</sup> related to a "snowflake" appearance pattern which was disease-related to gout and rheumatoid arthritis. The article, "An Image Intensification Technique of Motion Picture Kirlian Photography," authored by Gary Pooke and Paul Sparks,<sup>5</sup> is fascinating. These gentlemen were researchers at the U.S. Naval postgraduate school in the Man/Machine Systems Design Lab in Monterey, California. Their conclusion on Kirlian photography was: "It is the author's belief that the technique described here is another step for that verification, in addition, to its possible uses in psychology, medicine, agriculture, art and industry."<sup>5</sup>

My findings show that the chiropractic adjustment affects the body and change can be demonstrated by Kirlian photography far distal from the spine. Changes noted in the fingertips and toes after cervical and lumbar spinal adjustment, respectively, have been recorded. The mechanism of this action is probably mediated through the autonomic nervous system. Electrochemical imaging of skin physiology is one hypothesis.

Kirlian photographs taken at my office to date have employed only black and white film, not color imaging yet. Black and white print paper can be developed through an autonomic processor, whereas color film must be hand developed. The technology employed in my Kirlian research is the Research Model Kirlian Imager by Pantheon Systems, Inc. This unit is very user-friendly.

Kirlian photography is considered safe but should not be used on people with pacemakers, heart disease, or during pregnancy.

Proper written patient consent is obtained first. Kirlian photography is performed in my office in the x-ray lab and is performed with darkroom conditions. The lab is carpeted, and both doctor (or technician) and patient do not touch any metal, and are not near any conductible surfaces. Factors are set on the Kirlian Imager and the patient's body/appendage is positioned on the copper insulated surface. Fingers, hands, toes and feet can be imaged well with the Pantheon Kirlian Imager. Exposures can be variable in time; i.e., one second and intensity of energy can be modulated too.

The above discussion is to show that other healing arts and scientists have researched this technology. It is appropriate at this time that our profession look into this technology for future chiropractic utilization. Further serious study of this subject with research design methodology is encouraged.

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