

Spine Pain Relief in the 21st Century: New Discoveries Old!

By Matthew J. Taylor, PT, PhD, RYT

Q: Why does chronic back and neck pain continue to be a bigger problem every year in terms of dollars spent, disability and numbers suffering from pain when modern science is making so many discoveries?

A: When I wrote my dissertation on chronic spine pain in 2005 it was both disheartening and frustrating to review the scientific literature and confirm this very question. As healthcare providers we are falling behind, not gaining on offering relief to our clients. You go the doctor, the chiropractor, the acupuncturist, the physical therapist, the massage therapist and buy furniture, potions and pills and still the pain persists! What gives?

Why is Pain Care Falling Behind in Offering Relief?

The short answer is because we really know very little about human pain and suffering! Sorry, but if anyone would be honest, they'd admit we're just glimpsing the depth and complexity of factors that influence such a human experience. We have not mastered solutions and have far more questions than answers. Beware the silver bullet provider that claims to have "the" solution for your pain: They are either deluded or deceiving you!

You see it turns out our society's way of being in the world affects how we approach solving pain complaints. Further, it ignores probably the personally even more important related aspect: suffering which by definition is the personal meaning and response to the presence of pain. The reason suffering is ignored is because it is very hard to measure and changes moment to moment.

Our culture values and uses what can be quantified, manipulated and changed as an object. Your suffering and pain change constantly, is influenced by countless variables and most importantly, are uniquely yours alone. Society wants your pain to be her pain and their pain so they can develop evidence (proof) for what should work and what doesn't. That is what science



has been seeking and that's why we are falling behind: Your pain isn't mine and to treat me like you denies my human dignity and individuality.

Therefore neither of us find relief and the statistics grow every year. The good news is there are signs to some ways out. Those signs are not saying throw science out, but rather widen the lens of understanding and return to a more dignified view of human suffering that can be traced back 4300 years!

Yoga Meets Pet Scanners in 2011

In some of the earliest Yoga writings they described humans as complex beings who experienced suffering on many levels (physical, energetic, emotional, intellectual and spiritual). These levels (known then as koshas) were believed to be deeply intertwined and imbalance in anyone could present pain and suffering in any other or multiple levels.

Guess what science is finding? Exactly! Your pain can be influenced by what you eat, who you live/work with, your bed, your thoughts, your sense of being spiritually connected or isolated, your child's behavior, the stock market and what you believe. In my dissertation I cited over 37 different variables that predict chronic spine pain. Your pain and suffering is uniquely yours and for a healthcare provider to first presume we know what is causing

your pain, and then treat you using some proven way is hubris on our part. The solution the science points to for providers to assume some humility and admit we aren't sure and then team up to work with you to discover what is your unique pain and how can you find relief?

Discovering a Way toward Relief of Pain and Suffering

At my Dynamic Systems Rehabilitation Clinic that is exactly what we do. We structure the clinic to be a place where we have time and a safe environment to explore together the many aspects of your pain challenge and then safely and scientifically, apply gentle techniques to provide new understandings about you. There is no single way home to comfort. The process requires your full engagement and daily at home participation. The techniques require no special supplements or expensive equipment and can be applied to highest performing athletes to those facing the end of life from cancer or disease.

I concluded my dissertation proposing that chronic spine pain that fails to respond to traditional care is a call to each person to dig deeper into their very being and purpose for living. Our society "aches" for something more than our headlong pursuit of consumption and work. Pain calls us to re-discover each of our unique reasons for being. This is both the science of ancient Yoga therapy and the emerging evidence of 21st century science.

The staff at our clinic is ready to team with you in your discover process. If we can help you develop a safe, appropriate pain relief practice, please call 480-699-4867 or visit www.dsclinic.com to learn how you can do what will make you healthier.



Matthew J. Taylor, PT, PhD, RYT is a physical therapist and international leader in Yoga therapy. Dr Taylor lives in Scottsdale where he and his wife have a yoga-based rehabilitation clinic. He has authored numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals and textbooks on yoga therapy. He served on the board of directors of the International Association of Yoga Therapist, teaches nationally, and maintains a busy private yoga therapy caseload. For more information see www.drofyoga.com or email info@yogatherapy.com.

Call **480-699-4867** for a consultation.