

INTERVIEW An exclusive interview with Prof. Ulf Peter Christensson, who has succeeded in 'getting famous actors back on their feet' in just minutes

The chiropractor with the magic touch

"My dream? To establish a university for the training of chiropractors in Italy"

FABRIZIO T. TRECCA

TODAY'S interview is with a remarkable professional with immense experience and expertise who has succeeded in solving cases deemed impossible, the chiropractor **Ulf Peter Christensson**.

A brief resume: scientific high school, 1970, Hässleholm, Sweden; chiropractic degree, 1975, Chicago (USA); professional qualification registered with the Swedish Health Ministry, 1990; neurology diploma following a course by Prof. Frederick Carrick - USA, 1998.

What is chiropractic?

Chiropractic is a primary healthcare profession and the world's third most important healthcare sector after medical doctors and dentistry, focusing mostly on musculoskeletal problems of both structural and functional origin.

How does it differ from osteopathy?

Chiropractic is a profession requiring 5500 hours of study, whereas osteopathy is a practice.

Which joints and areas of the body have the greatest need for a chiropractor?

The most innervated areas, responsible for maintaining our postural balance in space -

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the high cervical and sacroiliac regions.

How old do patients need to be to undergo chiropractic treatment?

From one day old to a hundred years of age.

Your youngest and oldest patient?

One day and a hundred years of age.

Can chiropractic also help with malformations such as scoliosis, kyphosis and lordosis?

These problems are often caused by an altered perception of the body's position in space, in which case chiropractic is very useful.

How do you study a patient, only by examining them or also by doing instrumental exams?

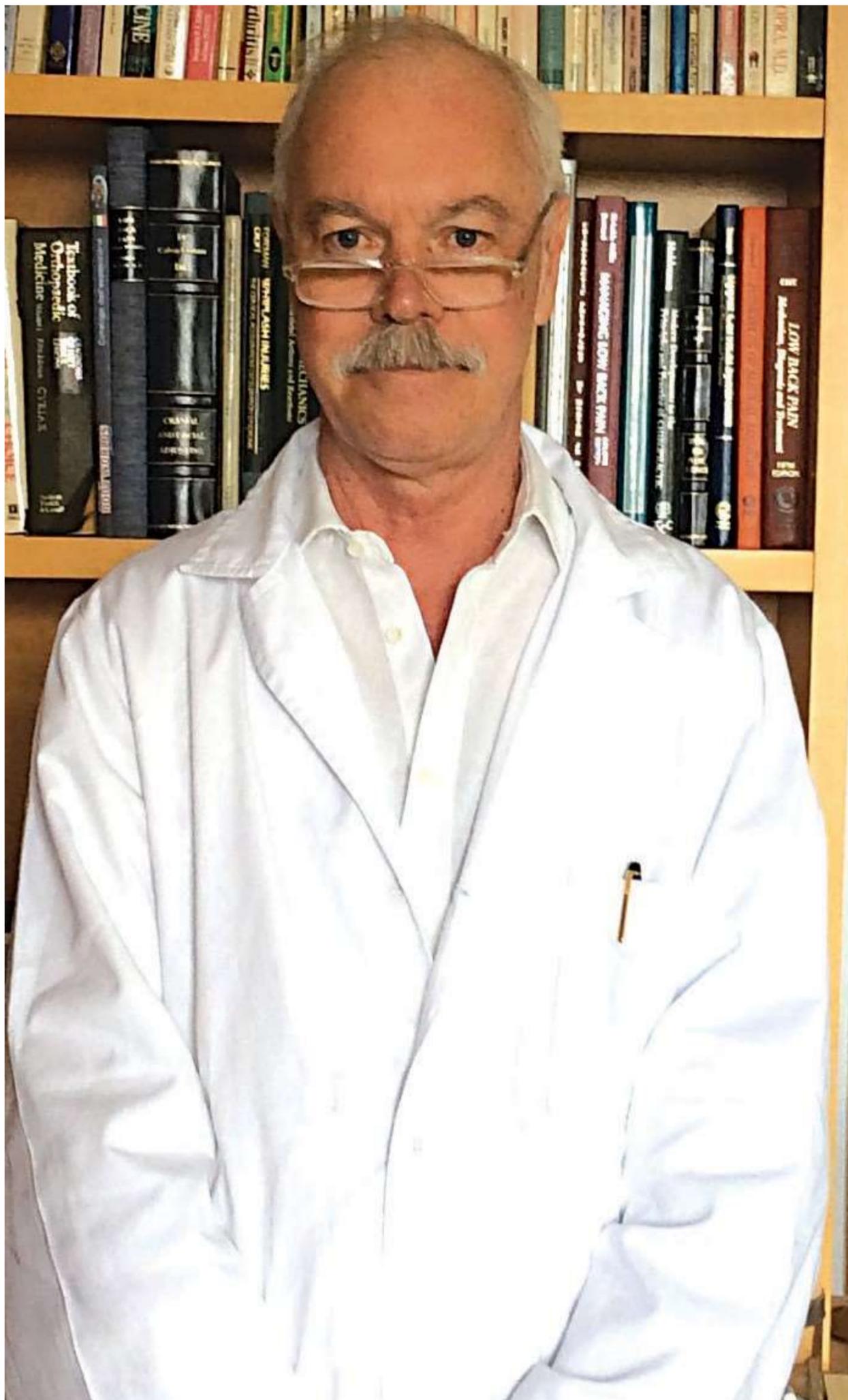
The basis of chiropractic is semiotics, with the support of instrumental exams.

Do you recommend combining chiropractic with other treatments, such as physiotherapy, and in what pathologies?

Rehabilitating patients with chronic problems always requires the collaboration with a good therapist.

Is it true that you often solve cases without the need for medication, and that you rarely recommend surgery?

Of course. While drugs certainly have a limited and precise role, part of the philosophy of chiropractic is to avoid the use of drug treatment, to prevent these masking symptoms which can often be solved in a non-invasive manner. Surgery, particularly on



the spine, should always be based on precise indications that are not always followed.

Which diseases require longer and more frequent treatments? How long do these treatments last?

For a patient to make a good recovery, any functional problems which arose 30, 40 or 50 years ago require a longer period of treatment, which does not necessarily equate to a huge number of

sessions. In these cases, rehabilitation is often carried out with the help of physiotherapists.

Do more women or more men seek chiropractic treatment? How old are they?

Patients are equally divided between men and women of all ages.

Is it true you can solve problems affecting professional athletes and sometimes im-

prove their performance? And in what kind of sports?

By performing a functional analysis of an athlete, the chiropractor can safely optimise his or her muscle activity. This applies to all sports.

Is it true that you have helped to solve problems affecting famous actors, issues which would otherwise have prevented them from acting?

Yes.

I have read that in the light of recent studies, chiropractic is addressing new areas, such as Parkinson's disease, chewing problems, and sacroiliac joint pain, using new techniques.

A fascinating and very promising field is functional neurology, as it allows us to treat conditions affecting the central nervous system using various types of stimuli, thus modifying central pathologies.

Another very interesting field relates to occlusal problems with reflex pain, where the chiropractor can play a role in treatment.

Today, many children spend hours in front of their computers, adopting poor postures that are detrimental to the health of their joints. How should we approach this problem?

It is crucial for all children to be physically active to compensate for the time they spend sitting down.

What advice can you give for keeping fit? How can we protect our joints and spine?

Walking for about twenty minutes a day, with proper breathing and proper arm and leg coordination, is the best exercise at any age, and also helps to improve cardiovascular health.

What type of shoes do you recommend? And other tips for a healthy lifestyle?

Since our feet were built to walk barefoot on uneven ground and this is no longer the case, it is crucial to choose quality footwear with good support. In lifestyle terms, we should opt for a biological alimentation instead of processed foods wherever possible.

In which health conditions do you have the best results?

I very much enjoy working with occlusal problems which

He treats patients aged from one to a hundred and solves cases without the need for medication. He rarely recommends surgery.

often cause a variety of symptoms, from migraine to low back pain.

Does a chiropractor also treat injuries? Which ones?

If an injury causes subluxation to any joint, as is often the case, correction is required as soon as possible to avoid future problems.

If a young person wants to be a chiropractor, what should he or she do? At this time of high youth unemployment, how easy is it for a young person with the right qualifications to find a job in this field?

Through the 2008 Budget Law - article 2, paragraph 355 to be precise - the Italian Parliament has recognised qualified chiropractors as primary healthcare professionals, a recognition that has paved the way for the expansion of chiropractic in Italy as a healthcare profession, especially since we chiropractors are not in contrast with traditional medicine. Quite the reverse! There has always been a great synergy between the two branches.

What would you ask the Health Minister or another high-profile politician if you had the chance?

To promote the peaceful and constructive coexistence between mechanistic medicine and empirical medicine, two branches which have always coexisted since ancient times, so as to optimise patients' recovery.

What is your dream? And your plans for the future?

To establish a university course in chiropractic in Italy.