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CURRENT OPINIONS IN THE PERSONAL INJURY ARENA

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— CURRENT TOPIC —

*The personal injury consultation: the area where many PI  
cases are lost*

**At Issue:** The word "consultation," as defined here, refers to that portion of the evaluation process that is generally found between the patient's completion of the intake paperwork and the doctor's performance of the physical examination. For musculoskeletal trauma, the consultation typically details the relevant history of the present injury and outlines the essential portions of the past medical history. When done properly, the consultation yields important diagnostic clues and helps focus the nature of the physical examination. When the consultative process is compromised, examinations are not logically guided, diagnoses are missed, and inappropriate/ineffective treatment is often rendered.

More than this, a compromised consultation means that important facts will be missed. Information about pre-existing conditions, complicating factors, or possible contraindications to treatment are but a few of the things that may escape the eye of the doctor. The defense is intensely looking for these types of omissions. The defense knows that such failures lead to misguided evaluation and management, improper treatment, and unsupportable conclusions. Thus, the strength of the PI case can be irrevocably diluted from the start.

The question for this *PI Review* is: "How can the consultation process for musculoskeletal injuries be made more effective and easier to complete?"

**Response:** The key to this dilemma is to make sure that all the right questions are asked and that the answers are intelligibly recorded. To accomplish this efficiently, one must use a well-thought out form in conjunction with a dedicated staff member to ask and accurately record the provided information. That's correct. It is our opinion, from years of experience, that a well trained staff member is better suited for performing the great majority of consultations. Staff members are almost always more thorough and have handwriting that is far superior to the typical doctor. The doctor follows-up by carefully reviewing the recorded information and clarifying issues with the patient, when required.

**How to use the enclosed paperwork:** Encourage the chiropractors you work with to update their consultation forms to better serve the patient and the PI case. Remember, the copyright is not enforced as long as this material is not used for promotional purposes or for direct sale. The copyright information must not be removed or altered in any manner. We can be reached in writing, by phone (760-744-1881), fax (760-744-2103), at lewkovich@cox.net, or at [www.ChiroPIexpert.com](http://www.ChiroPIexpert.com).

Enclosures: 1

**DR. GARY N. LEWKOVICH**

DC, QME, DAAPM, CO

**DR. JASON A. EDWARDS**

DC, QME

**DR. MICHAEL S. BLOTT**

DC, QME, AFFIC, CO

940 W. San Marcos Blvd., Suite B

San Marcos, CA 92078