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From the Editor

In this issue of the *Journal of Back and Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation*, the authors examine the topic of low back pain – its causes and its treatments. While the presentation of low back pain is very common, its etiology and subsequent treatment are yet to be uniformly accepted by clinicians treating this malady. This issue of JBMR is based on the assessment and treatment philosophies of the New York Pain Treatment Program at Lenox Hill Hospital.

Acting as Guest Editor of this issue is Dr. Norman Marcus, from the New York Pain Treatment Program at Lenox Hill Hospital. Dr. Marcus is joined by many of his colleagues at Lenox Hill in presenting their treatment protocols for low back pain. Among these is the late Hans Kraus, MD¹, under whom many of the authors gained experience using the Kraus technique to locate the source of muscle pain and the Kraus-Weber test utilizing strength and flexibility after treatment modalities.

Among the schools of thought being presented in this issue, and based on the experience of Dr. Hans Kraus, is the belief that, in diagnosing low back pain, muscular assessment is not performed as rigorously as it ought to be. In addition, the authors postulate that aggressive strengthening of the muscles, independent of an actual diagnosis, does not properly treat low back pain, and, in fact, may further exacerbate that pain.

As you are probably aware, these concepts, presented by Drs. Marcus, Kraus, and Marek Wyszynski, have been met with widely differing opinions regarding their validity. Therefore, fol-

lowing the presentation of these concepts, the reviewers, Douglas Wayne, MD and H. Duane Saunders, MS, PT, address the theories presented, to which the authors have responded.

Also presented is Dr. Andrew Fischer's design of an instrument to measure muscle tenderness. Dr. Ernest Johnson has prepared his points on the use of this instrument, and its implications, to which Dr. Fischer provides his counterpoint.

Other important topics covered in this issue include a review by Dr. Marcus of the work currently underway by the Academy of Pain Medicine's Uniform Outcome Measures Committee (UOMC). This committee was established in an effort to establish uniform outcome measures for pain treatment centers. As part of these efforts, the UOMC has opted to utilize the MM-PAP (Multiperspective Multidimensional Pain Assessment Protocol) which was developed through an SSA Research Contract (600-90-0229) by the Dept. of PM&R at VCU/MCV.

In addition, Dr. Stephen Abram offers a review of the literature on the use of epidural steroid injections for the treatment of low back pain. Dr. Lawrence Sonkin considers endocrinological deficiencies as a predisposing factor for the occurrence of low back pain.

We hope you enjoy this issue and we encourage your feedback on the material presented (see page 87).

Karen S. Rucker, MD
Editor-in-Chief

¹Dr. Marcus has dedicated this issue to Hans Kraus, who died in March of 1996. We join Dr. Marcus, and the contributing authors, in acknowledging the accomplishments of Dr. Kraus and his significant contributions to the field of pain medicine.