

# Research Arena

by LTC (P) Timothy W. Flynn, PT, Army-Baylor PT Program

1. Research conducted by the U.S. Army-Baylor University Graduate Program in Physical Therapy was recently recognized with the 2002 Texas Physical Therapy Association Outstanding Research Presentation.

## **The accuracy of the palpation meter (PALM) for measuring pelvic and leg length inequality.**

1LT Matthew Petrone, PT; 1LT Jennifer Guinn, PT; 1LT Amanda Peralta, PT; LTC Thomas G. Sutlive, PT, PhD, OCS; LTC (P) Timothy W. Flynn, PT, PhD, OCS, FAAOMPT; MAJ Matthew P. Garber, PT, DScPT, OCS, FAAOMPT

Leg length inequalities have been associated with a variety of musculoskeletal conditions. Therefore, the clinical measurement of leg length has become a routine and important part of the physical examination. The award winning study examined leg length measurements in 15 healthy and 15 symptomatic subjects using the PALM which is an instrument that was recently developed to measure leg length inequalities, however little was known about its measurement properties. The PALM was found to be a reliable and valid instrument for measuring leg length inequalities. The authors recommended that clinicians consider this convenient, cost-effective clinical tool as an alternative to radiographic measurement of pelvic crest height differences.

## 2. Collaborative project garners national and international attention

The 2002 Excellence in Research Award was recently bestowed upon LTC(P) Timothy Flynn, PT, PhD, OCS, FAAOMPT and colleagues at the Annual Conference of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Manual Physical Therapists (AAOMPT) in Orlando, Florida. The team of physical therapists included Flynn, Dr. Julie Fritz, Capt. Julie Whitman, Lt. Col. Rob Wainner, LCDR Jake Magel, MAJ Dan Rendeiro, CDR Barb Butler, MAJ Matt Garber, and COL Steve Allison. The AAOMPT is an organization that promotes excellence in orthopedic manual physical therapy practice, education, and research. The prestigious award recognized a collaborative project of the U.S. Army-Baylor Graduate and Post-Professional Doctoral Programs in Physical Therapy, Brooke Army Medical Center, Wilford Hall Air Force Medical Center, and the University of Pittsburgh, entitled "A Clinical Prediction Rule for Classifying Patients with Low Back Pain Who Demonstrate Short Term Improvement with Spinal Manipulation." The study examined 75 patients with moderate to severe low back pain, and identified those individuals that responded favorably to a standardized spinal manipulation treatment program. The researchers demonstrated that the presence of certain factors in the history and physical examination could increase the probability of success with spinal manipulation from 45% to 95%, thus allowing patients likely to respond dramatically to be clearly identified prior to treatment. The research was recently published in the

December 15th issue of *Spine*. Recognized internationally as the leading journal in its field, *Spine* is an international, peer-reviewed, bi-weekly periodical that is the leading subspecialty journal for the treatment of spinal disorders.

3. Lt Col. Rob Wainner the Research Director in the U.S. Army-Baylor Graduate Program in PT published a paper in the January 2003 issue of *Spine* entitled the Reliability and Diagnostic Accuracy of the Clinical Examination and Patient Self-Report Measures for Cervical Radiculopathy. The team of physical therapists Wainner, Dr. Fritz, Dr. Boninger, Dr. Irrgang, and Dr. Delitto, as well as COL Steve Allison from USARIEM. Recognized internationally as the leading journal in its field, *Spine* is an international, peer-reviewed, bi-weekly periodical that is the leading subspecialty journal for the treatment of spinal disorders.