

Area doctors find their research is of nationwide interest

BY PIET LEVY

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It was Walter Podguski's foot that led to his doctors' feat.

In 2004, Podguski, a 49-year-old unit manager for Family Express, visited Friendly Foot Care in Crown Point complaining of pain in his left foot and ankle. The Valparaiso man originally hurt his ankle playing softball and attributed the pain to his injury.

Podguski

But it was something else entirely. His doctor, Michael Nirenberg, with help from Friendly Foot partner podiatrist Michael Carroll, ran a number of tests on Podguski.

It turns out he actually had gout in his foot due to primary hyperparathyroidism.

Podguski didn't even know he had hyperparathyroidism. Even stranger was that a podiatrist was giving him such a diagnosis.

"You've just got to be on the ball for those one in a million things that walk into your office," Nirenberg said. "It probably saved his life."

Nirenberg and Carroll wrote about their unique case, published in the latest edition of the Journal of the American Podiatric Medical Association, a 100-year-old publication serving as one of the definitive periodicals for podiatrists.

"It's neat," Nirenberg said. "There's a small percentage of doctors who actually get papers published."

Nirenberg and Carroll see their

paper as an important reminder to doctors that strange symptoms cause foot pain.

"You have to look at the whole patient," Carroll said. "There are unique things doctors don't always look for."

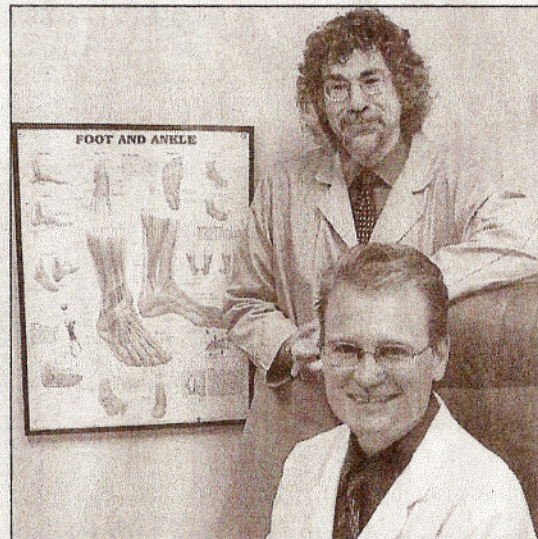
It's the second time Nirenberg has been published in the journal and the first for Carroll.

As for Podguski, Nirenberg referred him to a surgeon. He doesn't suffer from foot or ankle pain anymore.

The doctors plan to write other articles they'll submit to the Journal. One will be about a patient with a rare case of herpes in her foot.

"You don't see that all the time," Nirenberg said.

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Michael Carroll (seated) and Michael Nirenberg have offices in Crown Point.