

The Internet: Chiropractic Becomes #1 in Literature Access

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Chiropractic now leads other health professions with the highest percentage of its literature indexed, and has also been included this year in the some exciting new Internet resources.

The Internet continues to evolve into an important information resource to all health professionals. The expansion of information sources available over the Internet is driven by the increased demand for timely, accurate information. Online information access is no longer the domain of the educator, researcher, or librarian. The greatest increase in demand is by the practitioner who needs information to support treatment protocols, refute insurance denials, medicolegal assistance, maintain consulting expertise or educate patients, other health professional or managed care administrators.

In 1996 the Internet became a key player in bringing biomedical literature to health professionals. This summer, new Internet web sites were created by the National Library of Medicine (NLM), and large database vendors like OVID. In addition, a new chiropractic web site ([url=<http://www.healthindex.com>]http://www.healthindex.com/[url]) became operational this September. There are many biomedical indexes available through these various web sites. Fortunately, the largest database of chiropractic literature, MANTISTM (formerly Chirolars) has now been included in the Internet access of both OVID and HealthIndex.

As the editor of MANTISTM (Manual, Alternative, & Natural Therapy Index System), I have noted that in addition to chiropractic, the database also has become the world's largest index of osteopathic and manual medical literature. It includes more references than any other index to literature related to musculoskeletal issues (e.g., low back pain). Although the database is not nearly the size of indexes like Medline, it has made chiropractic #1 in one important respect; it has given chiropractic practitioners, researchers, and educators better access to their professional literature than any other health profession. This is because virtually all of the chiropractic peer-reviewed literature has now been indexed. By contrast, the largest index available to the medical community is NLM's Medline. Despite its huge size it indexes only 18 percent of the medical literature. It has taken eight years of indexing and data entry to produce MANTISTM. When the project began in 1987, chiropractic had no online access at all. It was more than two decades behind the medical community that has had access to Medline since 1966.

Kevin Compton, head of indexing for MANTIS,™ is directing efforts to expand the system to become the largest index of naturopathy, homeopathy, and herbal medicine by the end of 1997. MANTISTM is also including a number of important new managed care journals that are not being indexed by any other source.

The Internet makes chiropractic literature access easy and inexpensive to anyone worldwide who owns a PC. It does not have the problems and costs associated with direct telephone dial-up access. Through the Internet, the dedicated work of chiropractic researchers and editors will not only be more accessible to the profession, but will receive greater exposure and appreciation by the world

biomedical community.

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