

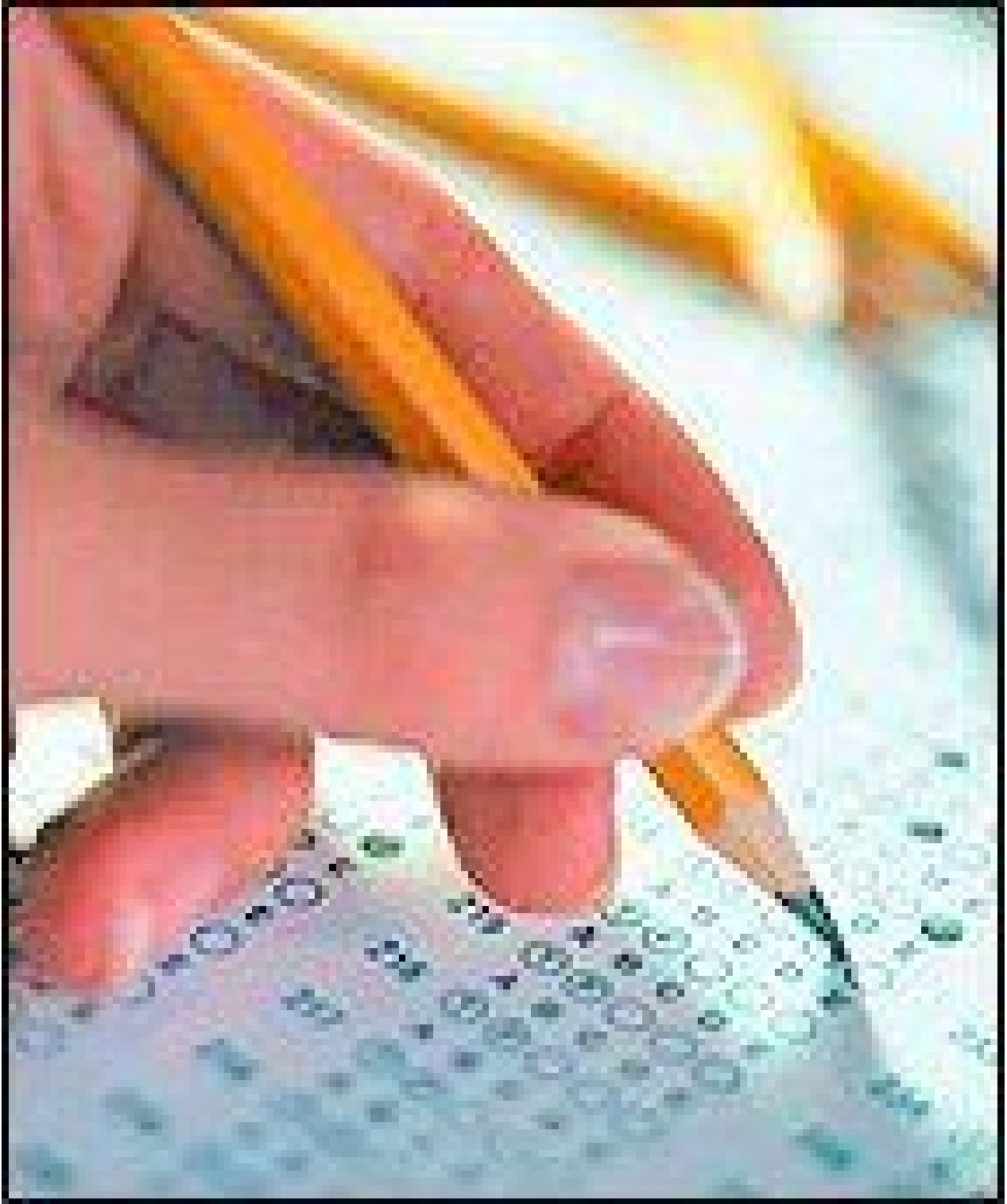


NEWS / PROFESSION

Survey on Continuing Education: The Chiropractic Perspective

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Despite the fact that continuing education is mandatory for nearly every practicing chiropractor in North America, surprisingly little is known about the average chiropractor's opinion of CEU courses. Are chiropractors satisfied with the additional education and training they receive? Do they prefer learning in a classroom setting or a clinical setting? And what about distance learning or online courses?



To answer these and other questions, a team of American and Canadian researchers sent a multiple-choice survey on continuing education to a random sample of 1,000 chiropractors. The results of that survey, published in a recent issue of *Chiropractic & Osteopathy*,¹ indicate that chiropractors value the continuing education they receive, with a growing preference for online seminars and workshops, and a clear interest in master's degree programs that qualify for CEU credit.

The survey, consisting of 22 multiple choice questions, was e-mailed to 1,000 DCs who subscribed to an online newsletter offered by a continuing education provider for chiropractors in the U.S. and Canada. All chiropractors who responded within 12 days of the e-mail were included in the survey.

Doctors who agreed to participate submitted their surveys online, with the responses stored in a database for later analysis. In addition to collecting demographic data, the survey collected information on users' opinions of continuing education programs (both traditional and online) and their interest in master's degree programs. A total of 358 chiropractors completed the survey.

Survey Results

Demographics

- The most common respondents to the survey were graduates of Palmer College of Chiropractic (19.5 percent), followed by Life University (14.8 percent), National University of Health Sciences (10.3 percent) and Logan College of Chiropractic (7.5 percent).
- Length of time in practice was rather evenly spaced among participants. Almost 37 percent of the DCs responding to the survey had been in practice 10 years or less; another 37 percent had been practicing between 11 years and 20 years; and the remaining 26 percent had been in practice a minimum of 21 years.
- Two-thirds (67.6 percent) of the respondents had a bachelor's degree. Almost 28 percent of the surveyants reported having completed a diplomate (or equivalent) in a particular specialty; another 10.4 percent indicated they were in the process of completing such a program.

CEUs - General Opinions and Practice Characteristics

- When asked how many continuing education hours they should have to complete annually, a plurality of respondents (37.6 percent) suggested between 11 hours and 15 hours. However, when asked how many continuing education hours they actually completed in the past year, almost 70 percent of the respondents reported completing at least 16 hours; 34 percent reported completing 26 hours or more.
- The importance of CEUs was not lost on the typical chiropractor: Over 95 percent of the surveyants felt that continuing education was "very important" or "somewhat important." The areas of continuing education considered most important were internal disorders & prevention (reported by 9.87 percent of the participants), followed by neurology (9.66 percent) and nutrition (9.62 percent).
- With regard to the CE courses they had taken, 85.6 percent replied that the courses were "extremely satisfactory" or "somewhat satisfactory"; only 6.2 percent said the courses were unsatisfactory to any degree.

Distance Learning and Online Options

- Almost 30 percent of the respondents did not take any online or distance-learning continuing education programs in the previous year. In comparison, more than 30 percent reported taking a minimum of 11 CE hours via distance learning or online.
- Distance learning was the most preferred format for continuing education. More than 46 percent of the respondents indicated a preference for online distance learning, followed by face-to-face interaction through seminars, classes and workshops (34.1 percent). Eighteen percent of the respondents replied that they had no preference.

Master's Programs

- Over half of the participants (52.8 percent) stated that they were interested in a master's degree program. With regard to specific master's programs, 43.8 percent stated being most interested in a master's of science in chiropractic sciences, followed by a master's in pain management or rehabilitation (20.8 percent each).
- When asked if they would be interested in an online master's degree program with which they could obtain CEU credit, more than 70 percent of the surveyants indicated an interest in

such a program; only 12.5 percent indicated they would not be interested.

As the results of this survey clearly indicate, chiropractors feel that continuing education is important to their success as health care providers, with certain areas (such as internal disorders, neurology, nutrition and rehabilitation) generating more interest than other categories. The survey also shows that new formats for providing continuing education, such as online courses and distance learning, are being accepted by the chiropractic profession, and that many practitioners - no matter how long they have been in practice - are interested in deepening their reservoir of knowledge beyond that obtained at chiropractic college.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle said that "all men, by nature, desire knowledge." While chiropractic as we know it may not have existed in Aristotle's time, the chiropractic profession certainly seems to have taken his message to heart.

Reference

1. Stuber KJ, Grod JP, Smith DL, et al. An online survey of chiropractors' opinions of continuing education. *Chiropractic & Osteopathy* 2005;13(22). www.chiroandosteo.com/content/13/1/22.

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