



PRACTICE & PROFESSION

NBCE Practice Analysis 2020: New Trends in Chiropractic

Editorial Staff

While it may not seem like it, the chiropractic profession in the U.S. is changing. Some changes are subtle in nature; others are not. *Practice Analysis of Chiropractic 2020*, produced by the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE), is the most recent effort to identify and track those changes.

Today's Doctor of Chiropractic

Today's DC is not the same as 30 years ago. In 1991, women made up only 13.3 percent of DCs. That has grown to almost one-third (31.8 percent), with women *the majority* (53.2 percent) of DCs under age 30.

Over that same period, the percentage of DCs with bachelor's, master's or doctoral degrees (in addition to their DC degree) has grown from half (53.7 percent) to over 80 percent, with almost all (95.4 percent) doctors under age 40 having at least one of these degrees.

Current Practice Trends



Cash is king, with more than a third (36.3 percent) of chiropractic cases paid with private pay or cash. A quarter (25.4 percent) of cases are paid through health insurance (non-managed care), followed by Medicare / Medicaid at 14.3 percent and managed care at 9.3 percent.

Twenty-eight percent of DCs provide care to our military, a huge jump from 6.7 percent just five years prior. Almost two-thirds (65 percent) of doctors focus on wellness and maintenance care. Other popular areas of focus include orthopedics / injuries (39.5 percent), care of athletes (39.4 percent), pediatrics (38.8 percent), rehabilitation (37.9 percent) and nutritional recommendations (33.3 percent).

The Chiropractic Patient

The typical chiropractic patient is still more likely to be female (57 percent), which is consistent with previous survey results. The age range continues to be between 31-64 (45.9 percent) with increases in age groups 18-31 (22.6 percent) and 56 and older (18.5 percent).

Research Consumption and Research-Based Treatment

Almost half of doctors (44.1 percent) read peer-reviewed research at least weekly, with 13.7 percent doing so at least daily. Consequently, almost one-third (30.6 percent) provide research-based treatment several times a day, with over half of doctors (51.1 percent) doing so at least once per week. Similarly, over one-third (37.7 percent) provide research / guidance-based treatment several times a day; almost half (47.4 percent) do so daily.

Note: Chapter two extensively details the chiropractic profession from both a historical and present-day perspective. With almost 15 pages of references, it is a great source of studies relating to chiropractic.

Part-Time, Full-Time or Not Practicing Chiropractic?

An interesting new addition is chapter eight, which provides information on DCs who practice part-time (less than 20 hours per week) and those who do not currently practice. Those not practicing tend to be male (63.8 percent) and 60 years or older (46 percent). Non-practicing doctors tend to be retired (36.7 percent), with 14.9 percent working as faculty members of chiropractic and non-chiropractic institutions. Less than one-third of those not practicing (32.2 percent) have left the profession.

DCs practicing part-time are slightly more likely to be male (52.2 percent) and 60 years or older (37 percent). Almost one-fifth of part-timers (18.9 percent) are homemakers, with 16.7 percent working as faculty members. More than 80 percent of part-timers believe they "greatly benefited" (61.2 percent) from their DC degree or that it was "very helpful" (19.8 percent).

Practice Analysis of Chiropractic 2020 gives insight into what our future growth looks like, examines our present state and charts changes across the past 30 years. It is available in its entirety for review at <https://mynbce.org/practice-analysis-of-chiropractic-2020/>.

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