

And the Survey Says ... We Can Do More

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I recently attended the European Chiropractors' Union conference, where the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners handed out copies of its 2010 survey findings, [*Practical Analysis of Chiropractic*](#). I always look forward to reviewing this information, as it gives me an idea of how we are faring as chiropractors. The 2010 version is 236 pages long, so I will not try to codify all the data. I would, however, like to share a few items I believe will interest practicing chiropractors.

Patient Visits

Every doctor I know talks about how many patients they see per week, and I'm always curious about the level of embellishment. According to the NBCE's latest survey, here is the true estimate of patient visits, provided by doctors who answered anonymously:

- 32 percent of practitioners see fewer than 50 patients per week
- 39 percent see 50 to 99 patients per week
- 18 percent see 100 to 149 patients per week
- 7 percent see 150 to 199 per week
- 3 percent see 200 to 249 per week
- 1 percent sees more than 300 per week

According to these figures, 71 percent of chiropractors see less than 100 patients weekly, which tells me that although we are a highly educated resource, we are also an underutilized one.

Reimbursement

I also found the data on how we get paid particularly insightful. Our reimbursements are almost evenly split between private insurance, cash and managed care, which collectively amount to 72 percent of our income. Here are the numbers. This data appears in the 2010 *Practice Analysis*, but is actually 2003 survey data; however, it remains relevant because it is the most recent reimbursement data provided by the NBCE.

- 22 percent is private insurance
- 21 percent is private pay or cash
- 19 percent is managed care
- 14 percent is personal injury
- 11 percent is Medicare
- 8 percent is workers' compensation
- 4 percent is pro bono care
- 1.8 percent is Medicaid

A small percentage of chiropractors are also currently employed under contract to provide care to active or retired military personnel.

Among the pages of other data, it is interesting to note that our profession is relatively young. Half of all chiropractic physicians have been in practice for less than 15 years, 26 percent have practiced 16 to 25 years, and just 10 percent have been in practice for more than a quarter of a century.

I wish I could wave my magic wand to help patients better understand our amazing ability to bring relief to patients by focusing on spinal alignment. We are expertly trained and clearly have the capacity to care for more people than we are treating currently. So, how do we fill that capacity? We must continue raising awareness of our efficacy through research and interdisciplinary networking, in order to facilitate broader integration into health care. Let's leverage the energy of these bright, young practitioners and prove that we are the most capable providers of spinal care.

For a summary of other notable findings from the 2010 NBCE *Practice Analysis of Chiropractic*, [click here](#).

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