

Chiropractic Is Thriving; What About Chiropractors?

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As we look back across the past decade or so, we see more than a few studies which point to the fact that chiropractic, as a form of health care, is superior to and less expensive than many alternatives. Two recently published studies underscore that point:

The Chiropractic Hospital-based Interventions Research Outcomes (CHIRO) study. [This study](#) compared care provided by family-physician medical doctors with care that included "chiropractic spinal manipulative therapy." Researchers found that "compared to family physician-directed usual care, full clinical practice guideline-based treatment including chiropractic spinal manipulative therapy is associated with significantly greater improvement in condition-specific functioning."¹

Manipulation or microdiskectomy for sciatica? This prospective randomized [clinical study](#) that compared surgery to "chiropractic spinal manipulation" found that "sixty percent of patients with sciatica who had failed other medical management benefited from spinal manipulation to the same degree as if they underwent surgical intervention."²

In addition to the above, there are other studies in process that will further demonstrate the benefits of chiropractic for both acute and maintenance care. All of this is the scientific support for what chiropractic has accomplished in millions of lives for more than 100 years. The effectiveness of chiropractic care is probably the primary reason our profession has survived.

The Great Conundrum

Something as effective as chiropractic should result in a successful practice for every doctor who incorporates it. This is why physical therapists, some massage therapists, osteopaths and other providers seek to include something resembling chiropractic in their care arsenal. Yet when you talk with other DCs, you quickly discover that many chiropractors are not nearly as successful as the care they provide.

The topic of this article comes from a recent discussion I had with a few of our chiropractic leaders. At the end of the discussion, we realized we weren't certain we really knew reasons for this conundrum. Is it the economy? Is it the state of the health care environment? Are some DCs just bad businesspeople? Are we taking ownership for our own success, or just complaining? And then there is biggest question of all: Are you as successful in your practice as you think you should be?

To be sure, there are many successful DCs. They see a large number of patients each day and make a good living. The ones I have had the pleasure to talk to are excited about their practice and eager to see the profession grow further.

But there are other DCs who are not doing as well. They may have been impacted by the recession, declining reimbursement and attacks on our profession – but are these really the core reasons they are struggling?

Unraveling the Issues

In an effort to better understand why some DCs thrive while others struggle to survive, *Dynamic Chiropractic* and *DC PracticeINSIGHTS* will be conducting a series of surveys and feedback requests. The focus will be on what challenges are currently blocking our success and what can be done to overcome them. If you are one of the DCs who gets one of these surveys or a request for feedback, please take a few moments to answer it. Your input will provide direction and enlightenment.

In a few weeks, we will be e-mailing out the initial survey that will help define the differences between a successful DC and one who does not consider themselves to be very successful. If you would like to ensure you receive this survey, please go to www.dynamicchiropractic.com/projectsuccess. Additional surveys and feedback requests will delve deeper, focusing on specific areas such as:

- The Doctor
- Relationships With Patients
- Business Focus
- Practice Structure
- Community Outreach
- Relationships With Other Health Care Providers

There is no reason why doctors of chiropractic who apply themselves can't thrive, can't achieve, can't become the DCs they want to be. By the end of this year, we should know much of what helps successful doctors be successful.

References

1. Bishop PB, Quon JA, Fisher CG, Dvorak MF. The Chiropractic Hospital-based Interventions Research Outcomes (CHIRO) study: a randomized controlled trial on the effectiveness of clinical practice guidelines in the medical and chiropractic management of patients with acute mechanical low back pain. *Spine J*, 2010 Dec;10(12):1055-64. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20889389
2. McMorland G, Suter E, Casha S, du Plessis SJ, Hurlbert RJ. Manipulation or microdiskectomy for sciatica? A prospective randomized clinical study. *J Manipulative Physiol Ther*, 2010 Oct;33(8):576-84. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21036279

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