



YOUR PROFESSION

## What Would You Name the "New" Chiropractic?

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Change the name of chiropractic? Dr. Michael Reuben, thinks so, in the [headline article](#) he wrote for *DC* (August 2017). His premise boils down to "rebranding," and the public and professional perception improvements that would result. He argues that the word *chiropractor* sounds more like a tradesperson, such as *contractor* or *carpenter*. Dr. Reuben favors a new name that would "sound better" ... perhaps a word ending in "ist," similar to *orthopedist* or *optometrist*.

### The "Problem" With "Chiropractic"

I happen to agree with him, and wrote a similar article many years ago, when I was the contributing editor of the *Colorado Chiropractor*, the journal of the Colorado Chiropractic Association. *Chiropractic* has too many consonants, I pointed out, making it have a harsher sound compared to a word with more warm and friendly vowels, like *osteopath*.

Another issue is that most medical jargon has come from Latin, not Greek. The person who influenced chiropractic's founder, D.D. Palmer, was Rev. Samuel Weed, one of his first patients. Since Rev. Weed was a student of the Greek language, he suggested "hand practice," and so it began.



And thus, the profession was named after a word that sounds like an adjective, leading people to ask, "Chiropractic ... what?" (By the way, if Rev. Weed had been studying Portuguese, we would be called "Quiropraxista," which is also cursed with spittle-flying consonants.)

Dr. Reuben also did not like the possible name of "orthopractor," since it "reeks of *wrack*, *crack*, *quack*," in his words. He may remember the orthopractic scare of the 1990s, when there was a serious, although feeble, attempt to change not only the name, but also the actual chiropractic scope of practice. Not only did it stir up emotional debate among DCs, but one could just feel the orthopedists getting lawyered up to combat "public confusion."

#### The Power of a Name

Names can evoke a smorgasbord of perceptions, emotions and "links." In marketing and branding, new names can be crucial to success in business, or sully the business with bad connotations. What happened to the name "Enron"? I bet it's a cheap domain name now. Interestingly enough, my mortgage company, Nationstar, just changed its name to "Mr. Cooper." (No kidding; go figure!)

What about people changing their name? Years ago, *National Lampoon* magazine did a parody on a fictitious pro basketball player called Ali Maumood Alishami who changed his name to Bobby Jones. (?) Then there is Prince Rogers Nelson, who went just by "Prince," changed his name to a symbol and then back to "Prince" again.

#### Where Will the Conversation Lead?

The search for a new name for the profession would not be easy. We DCs have had enough disagreements over words like chiropractic *physician* or chiropractic *medicine*. Dr. Reuben suggests new names such as Doctor of Vertebral Therapeutics, or Doctor of Vertebral Science. He also likes arthropedist, vertebratrist and vertebrologist.

I admire his guts in starting this conversation. However, I can't help but imagine patients getting vertebratrists confused with ventriloquists. One might wonder, "Why should I go to a doctor who 'throws their voice' in order to treat my neck pain?"

Who should lead the quest for a new moniker? A committee, of course! But if I get the call to serve, I will politely decline. I will quote Civil War General Sherman, who said, "If nominated, I will not run; if elected, I will not serve." A committee of three DCs will always have four opinions.

With all that said, and having had my fun with this topic, I do hope there is sober and thoughtful dialogue about what can attract more people to the enormous value of chiropractic care.

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