

CHIROPRACTIC CAN HANDLE A TRUTHFUL APPROACH

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Chiropractic medicine should continue to embrace research and avoid hearsay about effective outcomes, as a way to reduce criticism that it is not scientific enough.

There are 2 sides to chiropractic. There is 1 side which aligns with the biomedical model that is looking at function and dysfunction of the spine and peripheral joints.

There is a fair amount of evidence to suggest chiropractic in this context helps low back pain (in particular). This part of chiropractic can easily integrate into the mainstream of health treatments, particularly in the area of spinal health/pain. So, if anyone says there is no research backing chiropractic ... this is not entirely correct.

The other side of chiropractic relies on a healthy nervous system and the neurophysiology thereof. Although there is some (low level) evidence that this form of chiropractic is beneficial, a lot more research is needed. The problem lies with getting the funding to undertake this research. Research funding is impacted on by politics as chiropractors, physiotherapists, osteopaths and orthopaedic surgeons are targeting a similar market share.

Chiropractic has attracted some criticism about a lack of research but this is not due to a lack of will or motivation to research the area.

Lack of funding is partly due to the premise that there is a lack of foundation by which to do the research.

For example, the Friends of Science and Medicine (FoSM) believe a platform for further research cannot be justified. I strongly disagree with this premise. I've been in the profession for over 30 years and I've seen the benefits of this form of chiropractic. It could be placebo, it could be nonsense, it could be real, but the fact that people improve deserves to be investigated.

The problem is that there are practitioners in the field (and, sorry to say, educators) who claim chiropractic can cure something when there is no evidence. No profession can get away with this – the fact that chiropractic is targeted in this way is unfair but that's just the way it is. We need to deal with it accordingly and not make statements about our treatments that cannot be backed up.

In light of lack of strong evidence, a strong examination needs to be performed to determine if the condition is treatable or if it needs to be referred. Chiropractic performed well is safe. A trial of care could be given with informed consent with the patient. The patient needs to be educated about the benefits/risks in light of little evidence. All health professions face the prospect of treatments without sufficient evidence in some form or another – they do it because they know it works.

Chiropractic offers strong career prospects for people who have the motivation and passion for hands-on work when helping people.

Chiropractic should be a strong option for choice when seeking care for musculoskeletal pain. Chiropractic, performed well and ethically, is safe and simply put ...works.

People in key decision-making positions listen and as such my efforts to not provide any fuel for their attacks have consumed me somewhat. I have tried to do this without losing anything about who we are and what we can achieve in the future. It's created some stress.

The attacks from the FoSM were real and had some impact. However, while some of their attacks were legitimate, other attacks followed a clear agenda.

Being a leader of chiropractic programs in the past, my approach is to provide a platform to encourage students to critically think while at the same time exposing them to the full scope of chiropractic. If we teach them to think, the students will decide what is worth researching and what is worth pursuing as far as testable treatment protocols. I strongly believe students need to keep asking the questions for future research down the track.

Universities are about finding the truth. We need to find the truth about chiropractic and being at a university assists with searching the answers.