

THE CHIROPRACTIC PRACTICE MODEL: AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

ABSTRACT

This study conceptualizes chiropractic clinical communication within an interactionist framework and explores how this may contribute to healing within the context of chiropractic care.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Practice observation of 208 consultations undertaken by 34 chiropractors working in geographically dispersed areas of Australia was undertaken. Sample selection was purposive with a maximum variation strategy being used. Triangulation of data collected was undertaken by mailing the clinical communication scenario constructed by the investigator to participating chiropractors for comment and by having 144 patients complete a questionnaire.

RESULTS:

Communication in chiropractic practice is both social/relational and instrumental. Diagnostic and therapeutic touch are an integral part of the chiropractic consultation.

DISCUSSION

Verbal and non-verbal communication in chiropractic practice when analyzed within a postmodern interactionist framework can be shown to create an environment conducive to healing by establishing a shared clinical reality. The ability of the consultation to change perceptions and reduce anxiety is construed as a substantial factor contributing to the potency of the chiropractic care.

CONCLUSIONS:

Within a postmodern framework, one explanation for the satisfaction achieved by chiropractic care is the verbal and nonverbal communication skills of practitioners.

KEYWORDS: chiropractic, art of health care, communication