

Booth # E-28

Moving towards a contemporary chiropractic professional identity

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Submission categories

Published work (from 2020 onward)

Abstract

Since the inception of the chiropractic profession, debate has continued on differing practice objectives and philosophical approaches to patient care. While the political and academic leaders of the profession continue to dominate the discourse, little is known on the perspectives of the everyday practising chiropractor on their professional identity. In this paper, professional identity within the profession of chiropractic was evaluated using a systematised search strategy of the literature from the year 2000 through to May 2019. Initially 562 articles were sourced, of which 24 met the criteria for review. The review confirmed three previously stated professional identity subgroups; two polarised approaches and a centrist or mixed view. The musculoskeletal biomedical approach is in contrast to the vertebral subluxation vitalistic practice approach. Whilst these three main chiropractic identity subtypes exist, within the literature the terminology used to describe them differs. Research aimed at categorising the chiropractic profession identity into exclusive subtypes found that at least 20% of chiropractors have an exclusive vertebral subluxation focus. However, deeper exploration of the literature shows that vertebral subluxation is an important practice consideration for up to 70% of chiropractors. Patient care with a musculoskeletal spine focus is dominant in clinical practice. This review found that practising chiropractors consider themselves to be primary care or primary contact practitioners with a broad scope of practice across a number of patient groups not limited to musculoskeletal management. Across the research, there is a marked difference in the categories of practice objectives evaluated, and future research could examine the relatedness of these. Additionally, future research could explore the professional identity construct over time and within different practice contexts to help facilitate the progression of the profession.

Presenter Training Status

Early Career Researcher (within 5 years of obtaining your Masters or Doctorate degree)