

• DATA SHEET ON • CHIROPRACTIC

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Chiropractic is defined in the dictionary as:

"A system, or the practice, of adjusting the joints, especially of the spine, by hand, for the curing of disease." (Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, Unabridged, 1959).

Chiropractors disagree among themselves on the definition of chiropractic. One group, known as "straights," adheres basically to a strict definition, limiting the scope of practice to manual manipulation of the spine. The International Chiropractors Association (ICA), headquartered in Davenport, Iowa, advances the cause of the "straights." The second group, known as "mixers," advocates the use of modalities such as heat, light, water, electricity, vitamins, colonic irrigation, and other physical and mechanical adjuncts, in addition to spinal adjustments. The American Chiropractic Association (ACA), headquartered in Des Moines, Iowa, advocates the "mixer" philosophy.

The International Chiropractors Association defines chiropractic as follows:

"The philosophy of chiropractic is based upon the premise that disease or abnormal function is caused by interference with nerve transmission and expression, due to pressure, strain or tension upon the spinal cord or spinal nerves, as a result of bony segments of the vertebral column deviating from their normal juxtaposition.

Statement of Policy on Chiropractic

Adopted by AMA House of Delegates, November 1966

It is the position of the medical profession that chiropractic is an unscientific cult whose practitioners lack the necessary training and background to diagnose and treat human disease. Chiropractic constitutes a hazard to rational health care in the United States because of the substandard and unscientific education of its practitioners and their rigid adherence to an irrational, unscientific approach to disease causation.

In 1965, a United States District Court, in upholding a state's constitutional right to refuse to license chiropractors, said that "since chiropractic claims to be a complete and independent healing art capable of curing almost all kinds of disease, the state Legislature may have felt that the requirement of a foundation in materia medica and surgery . . . would be a protection to the public." Without dissent, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the decision.

The wisdom of these decisions by the nation's highest courts justifies the medical profession's educational program of alerting the nation to the public health threat posed by the cult of chiropractic.

Patients should entrust their health care only to those who have a broad scientific knowledge of diseases and ailments of all kinds, and who are capable of diagnosing and treating them with all the resources of modern medicine. The delay of proper medical care caused by chiropractors and their opposition to the many scientific advances in modern medicine, such as lifesaving vaccines, often ends with tragic results.



"The practice of chiropractic consists of analysis of any interference with normal nerve transmission and expression, and the correction thereof by an adjustment with the hands of the abnormal deviations of the bony articulations of the vertebral column for the restoration and maintenance of health, without the use of drugs or surgery. The term 'analysis' is construed to include the use of X-ray and other analytical instruments generally used in the practice of chiropractic."

The American Chiropractic Association's definition is as follows:

"Chiropractic practice is the specific adjustment and manipulation of the articulations and adjacent tissues of the body, particularly of the spinal column, for the correction of nerve interference and includes the use of recognized diagnostic methods, as indicated. Patient care is conducted with due regard for environmental, nutritional, and psychotherapeutic factors, as well as first aid, hygiene, sanitation, rehabilitation and related procedures designed to restore or maintain normal nerve function."

Forty-eight states impose license limitations on chiropractic, prohibiting chiropractors from prescribing drugs and performing surgery. Two other states--Louisiana and Mississippi--do not issue even limited licenses.

The cult of chiropractic originated in 1895 in Davenport, Iowa, when one Daniel David Palmer allegedly cured a janitor's deafness by "adjusting" his spine, thereby "discovering" a new method of "healing." Following Palmer's "discovery," he instituted courses in chiropractic, a name he derived from the Greek, meaning literally "done by hand." The courses in chiropractic eventually evolved into schools of chiropractic, so at one time following World War I, there were several hundred chiropractic schools in existence in the United States. These early schools of chiropractic, many of them short lived, offered Doctor of Chiropractic (D.C.) degrees by mail or in exchange for a few weeks or months of "study." This "study" included for the most part techniques in salesmanship rather than scientific training, and promoted chiropractic as a cure for every conceivable type of disease. To this day, its cult philosophy of following the precepts of its founder, D. D. Palmer, has not changed appreciably.

The medical profession also contends that the chiropractic concept of disease is unsupported by scientific facts, and that the

causes of infectious and other diseases cannot be explained by the chiropractic theory that disease is caused by a subluxation (partial dislocation) in the spinal column.

In the treatment of a patient, the first step must be accurate and complete diagnosis, and chiropractors are not capable of performing a differential diagnosis. An inaccurate diagnosis may give the patient false hope or false security. This oftentimes results in the patient's loss of the chance of cure that early and accurate diagnosis might have given. Since most patients who go to chiropractors do so initially because of back trouble, it should be understood that back pain is a phenomenon that is well known but complicated to explain. It may arise from a variety of disorders, including coronary thrombosis, growth in the lung, a duodenal ulcer, or cancer of the stomach. All pelvic conditions, especially those of the uterus and ovaries in the female, may be accompanied by low back pain. Diseases of the liver, kidneys, bladder, prostate, intestines, etc., also may be causes of low back pain. In some cases, the pain may be severe, in others merely annoying. Effective treatment must be based on accurate, scientific diagnosis.

In many of these health situations, and others, uncalled for manipulation is not only useless but inadvisable. No amount of manipulation will have any beneficial effect on infectious diseases.

Manipulation of the vertebral column also is potentially dangerous and harmful. In an elderly individual suffering from a disease such as osteoporosis, manipulation can produce fractures of the vertebrae. In patients who have a malignant disease of the structure, not only can fractures be produced by manipulation but a dislocation might be caused that is sufficient to cause paralysis.

Manipulation of the neck is particularly dangerous. At the neck level, if sufficient force is exerted in the manipulation to cause a displacement of the vertebrae, the spinal cord may be sufficiently compressed so the patient becomes disabled below the level of the pressure. Following manipulation of the neck, surrounded structures are sometimes so traumatized that the residual pain is far more severe than the original pain for which the patient was manipulated.

Such awareness of the limitations of manipulation or mechanical therapeutics can only come from intensive study of related medical sciences. At times it is necessary for a practitioner to use pain suppressors or other drugs which chiropractors are not legally allowed to utilize, and which require a thorough knowledge of the science of medicine, something in which chiropractors are not trained. A practitioner also should have a thorough knowledge of surgery, to be able to recommend that procedure when it is necessary.

The number of chiropractors in the United States is uncertain. The latest (1960) U.S. census states there are 14,360 chiropractors.

The American Chiropractic Association and the International Chiropractors Association, in their literature, claim there are approximately 25,000 chiropractors in the United States.

There are 12 schools of chiropractic in the United States. Not one of these schools of chiropractic is accredited by any recognized educational accrediting body in the United States.

The American Chiropractic Association "recognizes" eight schools in the United States while the International Chiropractors Association "recognizes" three. One of the three schools "recognized" by the ICA is the Palmer School of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa, known to chiropractors as the "Fountainhead of Chiropractic."

The only stated "requirement" for admission to schools of chiropractic is a high school diploma or its equivalent. A 1964 study of chiropractic school "admission requirements" showed, however, that five of seven schools involved in the study granted admission to applicants who did not even have high school diplomas.

The majority of instructors in most chiropractic schools are not trained or qualified as teachers of the basic sciences, and do not possess college diplomas.