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World Congress of Chiropractic Students

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The importance of Evidence-Based Practice and clinical competence in Chiropractic care

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Narrative: We live in an Age where Medical misconceptions, misinterpretations of research findings, and the dissemination of unverified claims have the potential to undermine evidence-based practice and compromise patient care.

By ardently embracing evidence-based practice, nurturing clinical competence, nurturing critical thinking, and fostering collaboration, we can safeguard the sanctity of patient care and fortify the edifice of modern medicine against the perils of misinformation

Indexing terms: Chiropractic; World Congress of Chiropractic Students, WCCS; critical thinking; information literacy.

Introduction

In the annals of Chiropractic history, the figure of Daniel David Palmer looms large, his legacy shaping the trajectory of the profession. As we navigate the contemporary landscape of healthcare, it is imperative to confront the implications of Palmer's controversial views and practices and their resonance in the present era.

The historical veneration of seasoned doctors' authority, juxtaposed with the modern surge in accessible information, has ushered in a paradigm shift where patients can scrutinise and fact-check their healthcare providers more readily than ever before. This transformation necessitates a resolute commitment to evidence-based practice and clinical competence in chiropractic care, transcending the shadow of Palmer's controversial legacy.

The shadow of controversy

Daniel David Palmer, the founding figure of chiropractic, espoused theories

... as champions of truth, stewards of evidence-based practice, and guardians of patient well-being, we must remain resolute in our commitment to the relentless pursuit of knowledge and the preservation of healthcare integrity ...'



and practices that continue to provoke controversy and debate within the healthcare community. Central to Palmer's teachings was the concept of '*subluxations*', purported misalignments in the spine believed to underpin a multitude of ailments. He was also famously an opponent of vaccination. Palmer's unorthodox approach, while embraced fervently within the chiropractic sphere, has encountered skepticism and criticism from mainstream medical authorities, with some of his claims standing at odds with established scientific evidence.

In an era where a seasoned doctor's word was once deemed as good as gold, Palmer's unconventional views held sway, shaping the early identity of Chiropractic care. However, the contemporary landscape presents a stark departure from this historical reverence, characterised by an explosion of information across myriad subjects, including healthcare. Patients now possess the means to easily verify the validity of their healthcare providers, underscoring the exigency of upholding evidence-based practice and clinical competence in chiropractic care.

Embracing Evidence-Based Practice

The proliferation of information in the digital age has engendered a paradigm where evidence-based practice assumes unprecedented significance in safeguarding the integrity of Chiropractic care. Embracing evidence-based practice necessitates the judicious integration of the latest research findings, clinical expertise, and patient values in the decision-making process. It demands an unwavering commitment to critically appraising available evidence, eschewing unfounded claims, and upholding the sanctity of scientific inquiry in the delivery of Chiropractic care.

The imperative of evidence-based practice extends beyond the mere assimilation of research findings; it encompasses a culture of intellectual rigour and a steadfast dedication to patient-centred care. By grounding our clinical decisions in a robust foundation of evidence, we not only safeguard the well-being of our patients but also fortify the legitimacy of Chiropractic care in the broader healthcare landscape.

Nurturing clinical competence

The pursuit of clinical competence stands as the bedrock of exemplary Chiropractic care. Cultivating clinical competence demands a commitment to continuous learning, professional development, and the relentless pursuit of excellence in patient care. It necessitates a mastery of the latest diagnostic and therapeutic modalities, an astute understanding of patient needs and preferences, and a willingness to adapt to the evolving currents of healthcare practice.

By nurturing clinical competence, we fortify ourselves against the perils of misinformation and uphold the standards of care expected by our patients and the broader healthcare community. It is incumbent upon us, as chiropractors, to espouse a spirit of continual improvement and an unwavering dedication to the art and science of healing.

Escaping the shadow of Palmer

The controversial legacy of Daniel David Palmer looms over the chiropractic profession, casting a long shadow that continues to influence public perception and professional discourse. To transcend this historical legacy, Chiropractic as a whole must ardently embrace evidence-based practice and clinical competence. This imperative requires a paradigm shift, one that prioritises the rigorous evaluation of evidence, the cultivation of clinical acumen, and the relentless pursuit of patient-centred care.

Escaping the shadow of Palmer demands a steadfast commitment to critical thinking, intellectual humility, and the willingness to subject our practices to the crucible of scrutiny. By aligning ourselves with the principles of evidence-based practice and clinical competence, we not only elevate the standard of care within chiropractic but also engender trust, respect, and legitimacy in the broader healthcare arena.

Nurturing critical thinking and information literacy

In order to inoculate the medical community against the insidious influence of misinformation, the cultivation of critical thinking skills and information literacy must be prioritised. Medical education and professional development programs should emphasise the art of discerning credible sources, critically appraising research, and scrutinising claims in an era fraught with misinformation. Equipping practitioners with the tools to navigate the labyrinth of information is pivotal in safeguarding the integrity of evidence-based medicine.

Collaboration and advocacy

Combatting misinformation in medicine cannot be a solitary endeavour. It demands collective action and unwavering advocacy for the principles of evidence-based practice and clinical competence. Interdisciplinary collaboration between medical professionals, educators, researchers, and policy-makers is indispensable in fortifying the foundations of evidence-based medicine. By fostering a collaborative ecosystem that champions the rigorous pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of accurate information, we fortify the bulwarks against the encroachment of misinformation.

'There are in fact two things, science and opinion:
the former begets knowledge, the latter ignorance'
Hippocrates

Conclusion

As the custodians of patient well-being and the torch-bearers of healthcare excellence, Chiropractors must confront the historical implications of Palmer's controversial legacy with unwavering resolve. By ardently embracing evidence-based practice, nurturing clinical competence, and advocating for transparency and patient-centred care, we can extricate chiropractic from the shadow of controversy and project it as a venerated cornerstone of evidence-based healthcare.

Let us stand as champions of truth, stewards of evidence-based practice, and guardians of patient well-being, resolute in our commitment to the relentless pursuit of knowledge and the preservation of healthcare integrity.

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