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World Congress of Chiropractic Students

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Walking into the world of ethics as a chiropractic student

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Narrative: At the heart of Chiropractic Ethics lies fundamental values such as respect, kindness, humanity, and the commitment to doing good in the world.

We are instilled with a commitment to do no harm and to prioritise the well-being of our patients. This involves not only mastering chiropractic techniques but also developing critical thinking skills to assess the potential risks and benefits of various interventions.

By staying abreast of ethical developments and engaging in reflective practice, chiropractors can elevate the ethical standards of their private practices and help influence others around them.

Indexing terms: Chiropractic; World Congress of Chiropractic Students, WCCS; ethics; patient care.

Introduction

'Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do'
Potter Stewart

Walking into the world of Chiropractic is not just a journey of academic and clinical learning, it is also a profound immersion into the realm of ethics. As Chiropractic students, we are tasked with understanding and embodying the principles of ethics that underpin our profession. These principles serve as the compass guiding our interactions with patients, colleagues, and society at large, shaping the quality of care we provide and the trust we inspire in those who seek our help.

At the heart of *Chiropractic Ethics* lies fundamental values such as respect, kindness, humanity, and the commitment to doing good in the world. These values are not mere platitudes but pillars upon which the entire edifice of chiropractic practice stands. Patients entrust us with their well-being, believing that we will

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always act in their best interest and uphold these principles without compromise.

As Chiropractic students, understanding and respecting patient autonomy is integral to our education. We learn to engage with patients in a way that honours their right to make informed decisions about their health, while also providing guidance and education to support their choices. We are taught the importance of upholding patient confidentiality from the outset.

Learning to handle sensitive information with discretion and professionalism is a foundational skill that we cultivate to earn and maintain the trust of our future patients. We are instilled with a commitment to do no harm and to prioritise the well-being of our patients. This involves not only mastering chiropractic techniques but also developing critical thinking skills to assess the potential risks and benefits of various interventions. We are taught to approach patient care with a sense of fairness and equity. Our education emphasises the importance of treating all patients with respect and compassion, regardless of their culture, background, or circumstances.

Learning to establish and maintain professional boundaries is a key aspect of our training. We understand the importance of preserving the integrity of the patient-practitioner relationship and avoiding conflicts of interest that could undermine trust. As students, we recognise that our education is just the beginning of a lifelong journey. We are taught the value of collaboration and interdisciplinary teamwork in providing comprehensive care to our patients. Knowing when to seek assistance and when to refer to other healthcare providers is emphasised as part of our ethical responsibility.

Ethics forms the bedrock of Chiropractic practice, guiding our actions, shaping our decisions, and defining our relationships with patients, colleagues and communities. As students of Chiropractic, our commitment extends beyond the acquisition of clinical skills; it encompasses a steadfast dedication to upholding the pinnacle of integrity, compassion, and excellence in every facet of our practice. This journey of ethical maturation not only shapes our professional identity but also serves as the guiding light illuminating our path towards becoming conscientious and empathetic healers in service to our communities.

However, the journey towards ethical excellence does not conclude with graduation, it is an ongoing commitment that requires continuous learning and self-reflection. Professional Chiropractors should be encouraged to actively seek out opportunities for continual professional learning and development focused on ethics and bioethics. These types of activities include seminars, workshops, and online courses tailored to address contemporary ethical dilemmas in Chiropractic practice. By staying abreast of ethical developments and engaging in reflective practice, chiropractors can elevate the ethical standards of their private practices and help influence others around them.

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