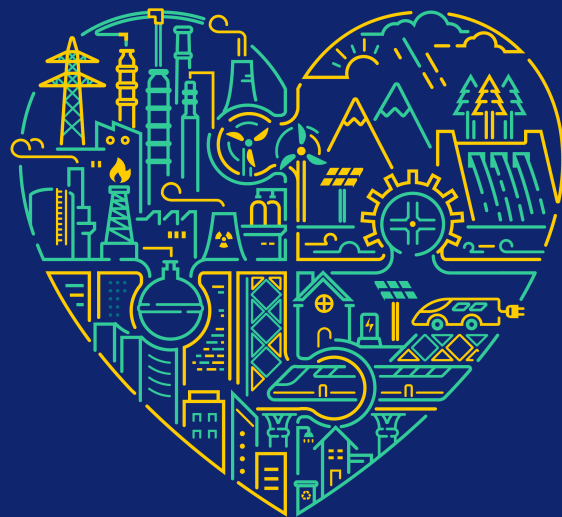


An Out of the Ordinary Chiropractic Career: About the person

John Lin



Introduction

When I graduated from Palmer West 2018, I never thought my life would make such a turn away from being an ordinary chiropractor, like most of my peers. Instead, here I am working my way through medical college in a country where chiropractic is not yet a legalised profession. [College of Medicine, Taipei Medical University, Taipei, Taiwan, Ed]

I believed I would be a regular practicing chiropractor in the United States when I graduated; find my future wife, buy a house, and live the rest of my life somewhere my future wife wanted. With these hopes, I sped through my national board exams and worked to obtain my license as soon as possible to start practicing. I became a California-licensed chiropractic physician in May of 2018.

Around the same time, I also completed my *Applied Kinesiology* certification as well as my CSP (*Certified SOT Practitioner*). I was excited to get my hands on people and change their lives.

Practicing in Southern California

I started out as a clinician working in a sports medicine facility. Being in a brand-new sports clinic, business was rather quiet to begin with, but I quickly found patients that needed chiropractic care. Although most of the patients preferred soft tissue work or aggressive manual adjusting, I incorporated a lot of sacro occipital technique (SOT) techniques alongside their standard care to improve stability for their workouts.

During the same time, I'd also gotten in contact with dentists and orthodontists in the area to talk about collaboration. Most dentists either ignored me or thought I was trying to sell them something. Despite this, there were two dentists who ended up sending referrals back and forth with me. In particular, dentists concerned with airway and posture were the ones that were interested in my work.

At the end of one year, my work visa expired, and I was faced with a new challenge. Either find a local woman to marry and become a permanent resident of the US, or dump all my patients and return to my home country, Taiwan. I had a hard time perfecting the prior, so I took the latter option. It was an uncomfortable decision to make, as I spent the whole year building up my

doctor-patient relationships, and just as I felt comfortable with my practice, I had no choice but to leave it behind.

Current status of Chiropractic in Taiwan

Because of its current unregulated status, 'chiropractic' is an unclaimed territory. Those of us who have a degree in chiropractic are no different in the marketplace than those that go to a weekend seminar, as both are not able to claim effectiveness of our treatments. Currently, there are approximately 30 chiropractors with a proper chiropractic education practicing in Taiwan, some of which hold a physical therapy license, while others practice by health coaching or consultation.

Most people I know told me it was absurd to return to Taiwan, where chiropractic isn't a regulated profession. 'It is as if a programmer moved to an island with no electricity. What's to do there?' Odds do not seem in favour of practicing in Taiwan, as many in the past have been accused of practicing medicine without license.

Despite all the opposing reasoning, however, I did notice people in Taiwan had a large interest in chiropractic.

Manual Therapy education in Taiwan

Musculoskeletal pain is perhaps one of the most common injuries in modern society. While many healthcare professions can treat musculoskeletal conditions, chiropractic is one of the main types of treatments people seek in the US when it comes to low back pain or neck pain.

Since about a decade or so ago, people in Taiwan have been very cautious of taking prescribed medications for pain. People have been seeking alternative methods to treat their musculoskeletal pain, and many times they would look for 'Tui-na' (Traditional Chinese Massage) or Thai massage, etc. However, spinal manipulation and massage are two musculoskeletal pain-relieving methods that are not properly regulated in Taiwan.

This also creates a lot of confusion when I try to introduce myself to people around me, as they do not understand the concept of chiropractic education or philosophy. In fact, most think 'back cracking' does not require proper education.

Of the formal educational programs that practice 'manual therapy', none seems to put much emphasis on their curriculum. Examples include *Traditional Chinese Medical Doctor* and *Physical Therapy*. One of the most well-known Traditional Chinese Medical Colleges (1) offers a 3-credit course in *Chinese Medical Orthopedics and Traumatology* and another 8-credit practicum course alongside as their basis for manual therapy.

Another 4-year *Bachelor of Physical Therapy* program (2) offers a total of 2 credits of manual therapy course and another 2-credit of Chinese Medical Traumatology elective. These curricula do not offer extensive manual therapy training as do Chiropractic colleges, with well over 30 credits on Chiropractic techniques. (3) Of the three health care professions above, *Traditional Chinese Medical Doctors* and *Physical Therapists* are regarded as the 'most suitable' professions to perform manual therapy on patients in Taiwan. Legislators don't seem to find a need to legalise a profession like chiropractic with extensive training and experience with manual therapy.

En route to become a Medical Doctor

Currently I am in the third year of medical college (out of six years total), and I greatly appreciate the knowledge and perspective from a medical point of view. Medical colleges teach quite extensively on histology and pathology, which is significantly less emphasised in chiropractic college. Not surprisingly, I excelled in musculoskeletal anatomy and cadaver lab

exams. Similarities also exist in both colleges. Basic sciences are covered in great detail in both, and there are numerous waves of exams that never seem to stop.

Healthcare in Taiwan

To my knowledge, Taiwan probably has one of the cheapest, yet most efficient, medical care systems in the world. Global Healthcare enables anyone to pay a very small fee and receive a high-standard medical consultation as well as prescribed drugs. To put numbers in perspective, a visit to the ENT for a common cold would cost approximately NT\$200 (US\$7) with the mandatory health insurance. A three-day medication is often included along with it. A chest X-ray would cost under NT\$400 (US\$14).

However, the quality and diversity are up for discussion in this country. Typical appointments are about 5 minutes in length, and often give little room for inter-profession referrals. In addition, there seems to be little incentive for preventative health actions. I often spend extensive amounts of time explaining to patients the importance of staying healthy and maintaining a symptomless health status. I would imagine it being nearly impossible to perform all the necessary history taking and physical exams as well as give health advice all under 5 minutes of time.

What I hope to achieve

With the assumption that I will most likely graduate from medical college, I do hope to bring the two professions closer together. What I have noticed is that there is not a lot of communication between medical and chiropractic fields, and I believe having dual licensure will enable me to form the bridge between the gaps. The local medical profession needs to acknowledge there are unique and valuable assets that chiropractic provides; the chiropractic profession must understand what chiropractic is capable and incapable of, and offer necessary referrals to the medical community whenever conditions are out of our hands.

No profession has 100% success; it is only when we all work together can we take a step closer to 100%.



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