



WCCS

World Congress of Chiropractic Students

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The image problem of chiropractic: A student's perspective

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Abstract: The challenge to unite our profession while respecting and appreciating the diversity within it is one that no person, country or organisation can solve alone.

That is why we encourage our student members to interact with and learn from each other early on.

I believe that if we focus on the core values that most chiropractors have in common: evidence-based, patient-centred care, we can grow into a united profession and then be more effective in our efforts to educate the public about our work and provide more people with chiropractic care.

Indexing terms: Chiropractic; Patient-centred care; Student; WCCS

Introduction

My name is Louisa and I am from Germany. I started studying chiropractic in Wales in 2019. When I applied to the Universities and colleges in the UK, I had no idea that chiropractic is a primary healthcare profession in the UK and what that would mean for my course. Throughout my first and second year on the course, I learned how many chiropractors there are in the UK and how many people are aware that we exist, which was mind-blowing to me.



However, shortly after, I also realised how little the majority of the public knows about what chiropractors do. This image problem is not unique to the UK and Germany but affects every country and every practitioner.

The WCCS aims include raising awareness of chiropractic. We represent the students and I think that puts us in a unique position to educate the public about what chiropractic is now and what it is going to be. Many other organisations, such as the WFC, have the same goal.

The question is, *how do we educate the public about chiropractic if we can not stand as a united profession?*

The challenge to unite our profession while respecting and appreciating the diversity within it is one that no person, country, or organisation can solve alone.

That is why we encourage our student members to interact with and learn from each other early on.

I believe that if we focus on the core values that most chiropractors have in common: providing evidence-based, patient-centred care, we can grow into a united profession and then be more effective in our efforts to educate the public about our work and provide more people with chiropractic care.

I believe that it will take time and that there will be obstacles but being part of, and now leading, the WCCS has shown me the potential of this profession, especially our new and future practitioners.

Despite the differences in opinion that we see in our WCCS discussion sessions and everywhere else, I was surprised by how much closer the opinions of chiropractic students lie together than I had expected. The large majority of students that I have gotten to know and spoken to say that they aim to be evidence-based practitioners and want to learn how to implement the proven and evidence-based treatment and management methods into daily practice.

From my experience, most are not particularly interested in learning a specific technique or theory.

Most students and young practitioners, especially during the pandemic are looking to gain confidence in building an envelope of care with different tools, instead of relying on spinal and extremity manipulation alone.

I think that this youth, these future chiropractors, their curiosity, and their motivation will help lead chiropractic into a future of being accepted as an evidence-based health care profession in more parts of the world. Change is slow and changing the perception of a whole profession takes time. But I think as the WCCS, it is our duty to help the students learn about the impact that their words and actions can have and that this will help this change in identity and change in perception to not only be faster but also more conscious and directed.

I think that there has been amazing progress made in the profession to become more evidence-based and clear about what our identity is. At the same time, there is still a lot of work to be done but I can't wait to see what the future brings after seeing the potential of chiropractic students from around the world.

Therefore I would like to ask all chiropractic students reading this to get involved, inform themselves about the issues and possibilities in our profession and to help shape our future and appeal to the institutions to teach their students about their chances, potential, possibilities, and responsibilities in helping our profession to move forward.

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Cite: Conradi L. The image problem of chiropractic: A student's perspective. *Asia-Pac Chiropr J.* 2021;2.4. URL apcj.net/WCCS/#Conradi