PRACTICE ANALYSIS OF CHIROPRACTIC

A project report, survey analysis, and summary of the practice of chiropractic within the United States
PRACTICE ANALYSIS of Chiropractic 2010

A project report, survey analysis, and summary of the practice of chiropractic within the United States

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Vernon R. Temple, D.C., President
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Preface

To ensure that the assessment of chiropractic students and doctors of chiropractic accurately represents what chiropractors do in practice, it is necessary to conduct a survey (a practice analysis) of chiropractors around the nation. The survey results also provide legislators, insurance representatives, educators, and the general public with an overview of chiropractic's growing importance and effectiveness as a healthcare profession.

This survey report contains data collected in 1991, 1998, 2003 and 2009 by the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE). Contained herein are important survey findings that reveal practitioner and patient demographics, patient health issues, and treatment procedures common to the chiropractic profession nationwide. This book also contains recent reports of research demonstrating chiropractic’s efficacy in the treatment of a wide variety of health concerns and provides descriptions and explanations of how this large-scale survey of U.S. chiropractors was conducted and reported.

Like the previous three job analyses conducted in 1991, 1998, and 2003, this most recent analysis presents the findings in a clear, organized format; such a presentation can only be achieved by the significant efforts of many people. These individuals include: the NBCE Practice Analysis Advisory and Steering Committees, private chiropractic practitioners, statisticians, editors, and NBCE staff members. Special thanks must also be given to the chiropractors who responded to the survey so that an accurate and representative picture of the profession might emerge.

A commitment to excellence by our nation’s chiropractors and by the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners is a distinguishing mark of our profession and expands public awareness of the importance of chiropractic in this nation's healthcare system.

Horace C. Elliott, Executive Vice President
National Board of Chiropractic Examiners
Introduction

The chronology of tests and measurements can be traced to the beginning of recorded history. Early writings describe processes including rituals that gauged the knowledge, wisdom, physical endurance, or bravery of ancient peoples.

At one time or another, through one form or another, mankind has always devised a means of assessing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of those seeking to meet recognized standards. As society has become more complex and specialized, and as the consequences of assessment decisions have become more weighty with procedures and results increasingly scrutinized, strict guidelines for obtaining reliable and valid test results have emerged. Today, these guidelines are established and refined by individuals, testing organizations, and the United States government.

In its role as the national and international testing agency for the chiropractic profession, the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners adheres to recognized guidelines, which facilitate the preparation and administration of fair, uniform, and valid tests. Specifically, testing guidelines clearly state that, “Some form of job or practice analysis provides the primary factor for defining the content domain” (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, National Council in Measurement in Education (1999), p. 161).

Organization of the Report

While compiling data from the NBCE Practice Analysis of Chiropractic, the authors were committed to providing comprehensive and accurate documentation of every aspect of the practice analysis project. Repeatedly surfacing during the compilation process was the reminder that the readership of the report might well include individuals with varying degrees of familiarity with the fields of chiropractic and/or testing. This prevailing awareness affected the construction of the report in both content and format.

At every step, the authors presented the relevant data, then stepped back to assess whether the body of information offered previously in the text was sufficient to afford and facilitate comprehension by a full range of readers. In many cases, the authors resolved this question by including clarifying background information that had been presumed unnecessary at the outset of the project.

Additionally, entering into the decision to include some passages of text was the need to acquaint readers with licensed practitioners of chiropractic, since these individuals provided the data upon which the practice analysis report is based. Thus, the authors have attempted to present an objective and well-rounded picture of present-day chiropractors and their practices. Also addressed is the historical background of the profession and current information including educational requirements for becoming a chiropractor.
The information is often presented as a general overview, followed by a more detailed topical discussion presented chronologically. The editors have attempted to convey information through visual means where appropriate. A glossary of terms can also be found at the end of this report.

The first two chapters serve to familiarize the reader with the chiropractic profession and its practitioners, including the personal, educational, and professional criteria these individuals met in becoming licensed practitioners of chiropractic. Also presented is research documenting the efficacy of chiropractic health care.

Chapter 3 provides background information relative to the regulation of occupational licensing. Here, readers are given some general information concerning licensure and certification testing and some legal aspects that shape regulatory agency requirements.

In Chapter 4, we present the procedures necessary to reap maximum project validity. This chapter discusses organization, development, and the research protocols observed in the practice analysis project, from committees to field tests to the gathering of statistics and the design of the final survey.

Chapter 5 describes the method and factors utilized in compiling the survey mailing list, tracking all components, tabulating the data, etc. A number of steps were taken to encourage a high rate of response. These are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 6 provides an overview of the respondent chiropractors and patient demographics. Included is a summary of conditions, treatments, and professional activities within chiropractic practice. The subsequent chapters provide a detailed breakdown of the characteristics of the “typical” chiropractic practitioner (Chapter 7) and the “typical” chiropractic patient, patient conditions and chiropractic management of those conditions (Chapter 8) as indicated by the survey response data.

The final chapter of the Practice Analysis of Chiropractic 2010 report (Chapter 9) summarizes the response data relative to professional functions, knowledge, and treatment procedures performed by the practitioners participating in the survey.

The appendices include the relevant forms and correspondence, the 2003 and 2009 Surveys of Chiropractic Practice, and a listing of survey participants. Also included in the appendices are the American Chiropractic Colleges’ Chiropractic Paradigm and its Chiropractic Scope and Practice. The appendices are followed by a bibliography, a glossary of terms and an index.

Mark G. Christensen, Ph.D., Assistant Executive Vice President and Director of Testing
National Board of Chiropractic Examiners

Mark G. Christensen