

# Chapter 1

## The Chiropractic Profession

Chiropractic is one of health care's fastest growing professions, partly because of its remarkable effectiveness, and partly because chiropractic typifies a growing trend toward natural, drugless, and nonsurgical methods of treatment.

Principles common to chiropractic can be found in the writings of Hippocrates (460-370 BC), Galen (130-200 AD), and even in ancient manuscripts of the Egyptians, Hindus, and Chinese. Examples of manual medicine appeared in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when "bonesetters" were used to treat sprains and dislocations.

Chiropractic's place in modern health care is largely attributed to Daniel David Palmer, a Canadian who founded the first chiropractic college in Davenport, Iowa in the U.S.A. in 1895. Palmer's son, Bartlett, succeeded him in the development and growth of the chiropractic profession.

### The Chiropractic Philosophy

Chiropractic offers a natural, conservative, medication-free, and non-invasive approach to the restoration and maintenance of health. The original chiropractic philosophy began with the principle that an individual's health is determined largely by the nervous system and that interference with this system impairs normal functions and lowers resistance to disease.

Chiropractic is also based on the premise that the body is capable of achieving and maintaining health through its own natural recuperative powers, provided it is given proper food, water, adequate rest, exercise, clean air, adequate nutrition, and a properly functioning nervous system. The Australasian Council for Chiropractic Education (ACCE), the accrediting agency for chiropractic and osteopathic programs in Australia and New Zealand, adopts its definition of chiropractic from the European Chiropractors' Union:

"... a discipline of the scientific healing arts concerned with the pathogenesis, diagnosis, therapy and prophylaxis of functional disturbances, pathomechanical states, pain syndromes and neurophysiological effects related to the statics and dynamics of the locomotor system, especially of the spine and pelvis."

The ACCE defines the practitioner of chiropractic in somewhat simpler terms, as a member of the healing arts professions who "gives particular attention to the relationship of structural and neurological aspects of the body in health and disease and is educated in the basic and clinical sciences as well as in related health subjects."

## **Chiropractic Case Management**

Doctors of Chiropractic (DCs) address various physiological and biomechanical aspects of health, including structural, spinal, musculoskeletal, neurological, vascular, nutritional, emotional, somatic, and environmental relationships. The study of chiropractic includes the mechanisms involved in compression, stretching, irritation, and resulting aberrant reflex pathways of the nervous system.

Case management of these problems may include, but may not be limited to, such procedures as adjustment and manipulation of the spinal column, and/or joints and adjacent tissues of the human body. In many cases, spinal X-rays, and other diagnostic procedures are used to identify the source of a patient's complaint, along with physical examination and questions concerning medical history, dietary habits, and lifestyle.

Central to chiropractic is the corrective structural adjustment or manipulation of spinal vertebrae or pelvic segments which have become displaced and/or have restricted movement, possibly with signs of neurological and/or vascular involvement. Several terms are used by chiropractors to describe this concept, most commonly *joint dysfunction* and/or *spinal subluxation*. The causative factors of these joint dysfunctions (static or dynamic) include various types of stresses or congenital anomalies.

The manual correction of joint dysfunction requires highly developed psychomotor skills to deliver a precise corrective adjustment. By manually adjusting vertebrae into their normal physiological relationship, interference with the nervous system is thus relieved, and normal mobility and comfort are reestablished.

Chiropractic methods have evolved over time; studies documenting these methods have indicated that, in addition to orthopedic conditions such as backache, headache and whiplash, conditions that involve organs and internal glands of the body might also respond to chiropractic adjustments (Plaugher 1993). In many instances, modern chiropractic care includes the supplementing of spinal adjustments with a variety of extremity joint adjustments or certain physiotherapeutic modalities, exercise, and nutritional counseling.

## **International Recognition of Chiropractic**

As of this writing, there are approximately 1,281 practicing chiropractors located in Australia, and approximately 105 practicing chiropractors located in New Zealand. Over half of the practicing chiropractors worldwide have graduated since 1977.

Australia is the largest island continent in the world. A member of the British Commonwealth, Australia covers an area of approximately three million square miles in the Southern Hemisphere. It is comprised of six states and two territories of widely varying populations. These are (in order of decreasing population): New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Australian Capital Territory (a federal territory within New South Wales) and Northern Territory.

New Zealand is an island nation which lies southeast of Australia. New Zealand is made up of two large and several small islands, covering approximately 103,736 square miles. New

Zealand is also a member of the British Commonwealth. New Zealand, along with Australia, the South Pacific islands of New Guinea, the Malay Archipelago, and other adjacent islands are referred to as Australasia.

Chiropractic is officially recognized and legally practiced in all eight Australian states and territories, as well as in New Zealand. Chiropractic legislation in both countries requires that practitioners of chiropractic be registered with the appropriate regulatory agency. In addition to Australia and New Zealand, chiropractors are legally recognized or are allowed to practice without official sanction in the following nations:

Belgium	Germany	Japan	Spain
Belize*	Greece	Jordan	Sweden
Bermuda	Guam	Liechtenstein	Switzerland
Brazil	Guatemala	Mexico	The Netherlands
Canada	HongKong	Nambia*	United Kingdom
Colombia	Iceland	Norway	United States
Cyprus	Iran	Panama	U.S. Virgin Islands
Denmark	Ireland	Peru	Venezuela
Ecuador	Italy	Puerto Rico	Zimbabwe
Finland	Jamaica	South Africa	

*\* Legislation pending*

## **The Australia-New Zealand Health Care System**

A 1990 survey of adult residents in the Perth metropolitan area estimated that one in every three adult respondents had received chiropractic treatment sometime during his/her lifetime. In addition, one in every five had received chiropractic treatment in the past five years. The most common reason for visiting a chiropractor was back pain. Similar studies show that back pain affects up to 30% of the population at any given time and will afflict up to 80% of individuals at least once in their lifetimes.

Chiropractors in both Australia and New Zealand are by law registered as primary contact, broad diagnostic scope practitioners, with a therapeutic scope limited to adjustment, manipulation and, in most jurisdictions, the use of physiological therapeutics. Since practitioners are recognized as primary contact caregivers, they can administer patient treatment without prior referral.

While registration of health professionals is controlled at the state or territorial level in Australia, expenditure for public health is administered nationally in both countries. Public health care in Australia is administered by Medicare, a universal health care system which utilizes private health practitioners. Under this form of health care, the government provides essential medical services through a public hospital system at no direct cost to residents. Approximately 35% of the population additionally subscribes to some form of private health insurance.

All private insurance health funds cover chiropractic services. Additionally, in most jurisdictions, workers' compensation and transport accident insurance laws include provisions for payment of chiropractic services. It is recommended by the Medicare Benefits

Review Committee that chiropractors' services be covered when limited to the management of musculoskeletal conditions. Conditions outside these provisions are the responsibility of the patient.

Upon application, Commonwealth funds may also be dispersed to a limited number of appointments of chiropractors in public hospitals and/or community health centers. No appointments have been made to date. The public hospital system is said to deliver a high quality of health care, as well as to excel in areas of specialized medical research.

In New Zealand, health care is essentially government funded, but a part-user payment system has resulted in many people using private health insurance. In New Zealand a government funded workers' compensation scheme administered by the Accident Compensation Corporation operates as a health care insurer for any accident or injury sustained during work or recreational activities.

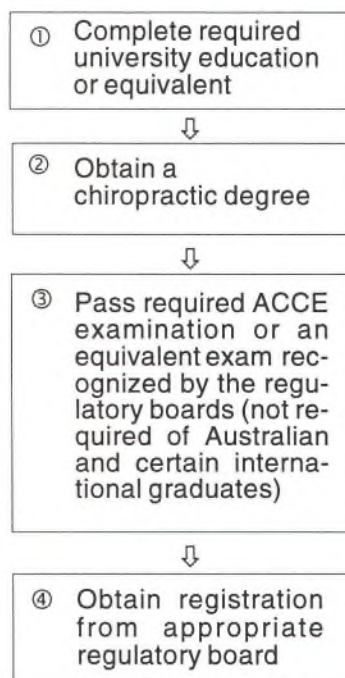
## Chiropractic Requisites and Education

In general, there are four major steps an individual must complete in order to become a practitioner of chiropractic in Australia or New Zealand (Figure 1.2): 1) successfully complete a minimum of five years of university education or equivalent; 2) graduate from a chiropractic college; 3) pass the required ACCE examination or equivalent exam recognized by the regulatory boards (not required by Australian and certain international graduates), and; 4) obtain registration from the appropriate regulatory board(s).

*Registered Australian or New Zealand chiropractors in most jurisdictions are entitled to use the courtesy title of "doctor". The chiropractor is engaged in the treatment and prevention of disease as well as in the promotion of public health and welfare. As such, doctors of chiropractic must meet stringent testing, educational, and performance standards before being registered to practice.*

A doctor of chiropractic's training generally requires a minimum of five years of college study. Government inquiries (described in the following chapter), as well as independent investigations by medical practitioners, have affirmed that today's chiropractic undergraduate training is of equivalent standard to medical training in all pre-clinical subjects (Chapman-Smith, 1988).

According to the international 1992-1993 *Chiropractic College Directory*, the



**FIGURE 1.2**  
**Steps Leading to Chiropractic Practice**

academic background of 83.1% of the students entering chiropractic college was in life science/biology. The remaining 16.9% had studied liberal arts, business, economics, physical science, engineering, and education.

In Australia and New Zealand, the primary accrediting agency for the chiropractic profession is the Australasian Council for Chiropractic and Education (ACCE). The ACCE is recognized by the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Committee as the official body representing the interests of chiropractic and osteopathic education.

Established in 1976 as the Australasian Council on Chiropractic Education, the ACCE was incorporated under the Companies Act (1962) as a limited liability company. As such, it is overseen by a board of directors and advised by a Commission on Accreditation, a Commission on Professional Competency, and a Commission on Postgraduate Awards. The ACCE maintains international reciprocity with chiropractic accrediting agencies such as the U.S. and the Canadian Council on Chiropractic Education (CCCE) and the European Council on Chiropractic Education (ECCE).

To ensure that high standards in chiropractic education are maintained, all accredited chiropractic colleges must meet certain requirements. Criteria address curriculum, staff qualifications, staff-student ratio, library holdings, facilities, school governance, administration, and financial stability. At this time, accredited chiropractic colleges exist in Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, and South Africa.

The chiropractic curriculum typically consists of either four or five academic years.

Courses which a first-year chiropractic student can expect to study are the following:

anatomy I	biosciences
chiropractic science I	chemistry
biomechanics I	clinical practicum I

Second-year chiropractic students can expect to study the following:

anatomy II	chiropractic science
biochemistry	microbiology & pathology I
physiology II	clinical practicum II
diagnosis	

Third-year students' coursework includes the following:

chiropractic science III	physiology III
biomechanics III	radiology
diagnosis & management I	clinical practicum III
microbiology & pathology II	

Fourth and fifth-year students' coursework includes the following:

chiropractic science IV
diagnosis & management II & III
social sciences
clinical practicum IV & V

## **RMIT UNIVERSITY**

The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University) School of Chiropractic and Osteopathy was established in 1981 (known as Phillip Institute of Technology until 1993). Now in its second century, RMIT is recognized as one of Australia's leading universities. Its faculty and students are involved in a wide range of applied research and development programs. Around 38,000 individuals attend classes at one or more of its three campuses.

The RMIT School of Chiropractic and Osteopathy in Bundoora is one of two colleges accredited by the ACCE. Graduates of RMIT's School of Chiropractic and Osteopathy receive either a bachelor of applied science (chiropractic) degree, or a bachelor of applied science (osteopathy) degree. The RMIT program meets or exceeds international standards established for the chiropractic profession.

In addition to specific regional entrance requirements, RMIT School of Chiropractic and Osteopathy applicants must hold the Victorian Certificate of Education (considered to be comparable to one year of junior college in the U.S. system) or its equivalent, and must have completed the prerequisite subjects of English, chemistry, biology, mathematics or physics. Applicants must undergo a pre-admission interview or provide a suitable report from an acceptable regional chiropractic organization which must demonstrate suitable knowledge and motivation.

## **Macquarie University - Sydney**

Macquarie University, located in the northwestern suburbs of Sydney, was established in 1964, and is a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities. The postgraduate chiropractic program offered by the Macquarie Centre for Chiropractic through the School of Biological Sciences is accredited by the ACCE.

The course is designed to provide first-year students with clinical literacy, and second-year students with access to applied clinical work. In each year, the student is exposed to direct classroom instruction for about 34 hours per week. Additionally, students undertake a clinical assignment.

## **Specializations**

Acting on the recommendation of its Commission on Postgraduate Awards, the Australasian Council for Chiropractic Education has, to date, admitted five chiropractors to the status of *Fellow* of the Australasian College of Chiropractic Science, and two to the status of *Fellow* of the Australasian College of Chiropractic Radiology.

The standards, disciplines and mechanisms for future specialty certification in chiropractic are currently under consideration by professional and other committees in Australia and New Zealand. Postgraduate specialty-type education via a Master of Applied Science by coursework and minor thesis is available at RMIT University in the following streams: Chiropractic Pediatrics, Sports Chiropractic, Musculoskeletal Management, and Acupuncture.