

Chiropractic Update



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Journal Publications by Australian Chiropractic Academics: Are they enough?

A recent survey (1) aimed to document the number of journal publications attributed to the academic faculty of Australian chiropractic tertiary institutions.

The authors proceeded by accessing the departmental websites for the three Australian chiropractic tertiary institutions and compiling a list of academic faculty compiled. It was noted whether each academic held a chiropractic qualification or research Doctoral (not professional) degree qualification.

A review of the literature was conducted using the names of the academics and cross-referencing to publications listed independently in the PubMed and Index to Chiropractic Literature (ICL) databases (from inception to February 27 2006).

Using that information an annual and recent publication rate was constructed.

The authors report that for the 41 academics there was a total of 155 PubMed listed publications (mean 3.8, annual rate per academic 0.31) and 415 ICL listed publications (mean 10.1, annual rate 0.62).

Over the last five years there have been 50 PubMed listed publications (mean 1.2, annual rate 0.24) and 97 ICL listed publications (mean 2.4, annual rate 0.47). Chiropractor academics (n=31) had 29 PubMed listed publications (mean 2.5, annual rate 0.27) and 265 ICL listed publications (mean 8.5, annual rate 0.57).

Academics with a doctoral degree (n=13) had 134 PubMed listed publications (mean 10.3, annual rate 0.70) and 311 ICL listed publications (mean 23.9, annual rate 1.44). Academics without a Doctoral degree (n=28) had 21 PubMed listed publications (mean 0.8, annual rate 0.13) and 104 ICL listed publications (mean 3.7, annual rate 0.24).

During the course of their discussion the authors note that,

“Our review revealed that there is a confronting **paucity of publications produced by the majority of chiropractic academics within Australia**. The average publication rate per year for all academics in the PubMed database was 0.31 and in the ICL database 0.62. Over the last five years, these figures have dropped to 0.24 and 0.47 respectively

....Based on this criterion, a healthy publication rate is achieved by only a minority of chiropractic academics. This has created an imbalance in research productivity amongst the academics such that 10% of academics have produced two thirds of the PubMed listed publications and over the last five years and more strikingly, **three academics have produced three quarters of the PubMed listed publications**”

....Interestingly, from an anecdotal point of view, many of the studies appear to be diagnostically relevant investigations, others are investigating the methods used by chiropractors, **but very little academic productivity underpins the philosophical basis of the profession’s hypotheses** despite the fact that these concepts are often presented by the profession as time tested and established... ..

....We also suggest that whilst not abandoning pure science research, there needs to be a change of research focus into **clinically relevant outcomes based research.**”

It is concluded that,

“While several academics have compiled an impressive list of publications, overall there is a significant paucity of published research authored by the majority of academics, with a trend for a falling recent publication rate and not having a doctoral degree being a risk factor for poor publication productivity. It is suggested that there is an urgent necessity to facilitate the acquisition of research skills in academic staff particularly in research methods and publication skills.

Reference -

Wayne Hoskins W, Pollard H, Reggars J, Vitiello A, Bonello R. **Journal publications by Australian chiropractic academics: Are they enough?** *Chiropractic & Osteopathy* 2006; 14:13.

Full text version of the above paper can be accessed from -
<http://www.chiroandosteo.com/content/14/1/13>