

National University of Medical Sciences-Spain

Thesis : Difference between chiropractic and osteopathy philosophies

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The goal of this thesis is to highlight the differences in the philosophy of chiropractic and osteopathy through their history, progression, development, and research.

The most predominant difference is that chiropractors will focus mainly on the spine whereas osteopaths take a more holistic approach and concentrate on the whole body.

Osteopathy is based on the principle that the wellbeing of an individual depends on the circulation of blood throughout the body. Chiropractic is based on the nerve flow throughout the body which exits the spine. You will realise that their primary philosophy is different, but their main goal is natural health care without any use of drugs or surgery.

History of chiropractic

In 1895, Daniel David Palmer, a Canadian, founded the chiropractic profession in Davenport, Iowa, USA. Palmer was well read in anatomy and medical journals and was known as a magnetic healer.

The roots of chiropractic care can be traced back to as early as 2700 B.C. and 1500 B.C. in writings found in China and Greece. Hippocrates, the Greek physician, also published texts detailing the importance of a chiropractic-like

philosophy and treatment. He is quoted in his writings as saying, "look at the spine for the cause of disease". Of course, that same philosophy then could be applied to osteopathy; the manipulation of the spine to improve wellness.

The first patient was a janitor who lost his hearing. It exists many stories about how and when this janitor lost his hearing, but they all conclude that D.D. Palmer saw a lump in his back, pressed on it, and the next day Harvey Lillard could hear noise in the street. They initially thought they had found a cure for deafness. So, all over the mid-west of the United States, deaf people were coming to Davenport to get cured. None did. But the second one also had a heart condition. He got better. The third one had another ailment that got better but, he was still deaf. Of all that came to get cured, none regained their hearing. However, they did notice other improvements with their health. D.D. thought he had found a cure for ALL DISEASES. Palmer then, decided to explore manipulation as an expansion of his magnetic healing practice.

In 1897, D.D. Palmer founded the Palmer School of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa.



The progression of chiropractic

D.D. Palmer's student and son, B.J. Palmer, assumed control the Palmer School in 1906.

While B.J. worked to protect and develop chiropractic around the Palmer school, D.D. Palmer continued to develop his techniques. In 1910, he theorized that nerves control health and introduced Innate intelligence; the intelligence wired into you that governs every single act in your body. Every single chemical reaction, every tissue formation, and every bacterial invasion that is fought off is controlled and coordinated by this innate intelligence.

For the next 15 years, B.J. worked and built the image of chiropractic and state laws were introduced in all 50 states in the USA. Since its beginning, chiropractic was controversial amongst the established medical system. Some were jailed for "practicing medicine without a license". The defence arguing that chiropractors analysed and adjusted subluxations and did not diagnose nor treated disease.

During that time, some chiropractors began breaking ranks and added other therapy to their treatment. In many chiropractic historical articles, we can find reference to "straight" and "mixers" Anyone who would do other than adjusting subluxations were classified as a mixer.

By 1924, B.J. estimated that only 3,000 of the U.S.'s 25,000 chiropractors remained straight.

By the 1930's, chiropractic was the largest alternative healing profession in the US. Mixers created the American Chiropractic Association which still stands today.

Up until 1983, chiropractic is classified as a field of pseudomedicine on account of its esoteric origins. Serious research to test chiropractic theories did not begin until the 1970's. In 1975, the National Institutes of Health brought chiropractors, osteopaths, medical doctors and PhD scientists together in a conference on spinal manipulation to develop strategies to study its effectiveness.

Chiropractic struggled with survival and identity during its formative years, including internal struggles between its leaders and colleges. The conflict between straights and mixers continue to this day.

Today, Dr Heidi Haavik, DC, and a PhD in human neurophysiology leads the research about how subluxations have an effect on the sympathetic nervous system and people's health.

Dr. Haavik has received numerous research awards and has published a number of papers in chiropractic and neurophysiology journals. She is on the Editorial Board of the Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics (JMPT) and Journal of Chiropractic Education and is a Review Editor in Movement Science and Sport Psychology for Frontiers in Psychology and Sports Science.

Chiropractic is regulated in most countries in the world and has as many as 46 Universities/Colleges who gives the degree.

There are 2 main organisations in the world of chiropractic; The World Federation of Chiropractic and the International Chiropractic Association.

History of osteopathy



Osteopathy was founded in the late 1800s by a physician and surgeon Andrew Taylor Still in Kirksville, Missouri. The idea was conceived and built from studies and experience while Still was following his father, a physician-surgeon. He recognised that the medical practices of the day often caused more harm than good. He focused on developing a system of medical care that would promote the body's innate ability to heal itself and is known today as osteopathic medicine. This holistic approach to patient care meant that the patient was seen as a

whole, not only someone with a symptom or a disease. According to Dr Still, "osteopathy, or osteopathic medicine, is a philosophy, a science, and an art". One of the early students of Dr Still added; a science that should be integrated into the osteopath's gaze is quantum physics, as its assumptions and mathematical demonstrations highlight many concepts that go beyond physics alone.

The osteopathic physician argued that the allopathic physicians had an overly mechanistic approach to treating patients, treated the symptoms of disease instead of the original causes. Dr Still began practicing manipulative procedures that intended to restore harmony in the body.

In 1892, MD Andrew Still opened the American school of Osteopathy in Kirksville, Missouri.

The progression of osteopathy

Over the next 25 years, Still attracted support for his medical philosophy that disapproved orthodox medicine and shaped his philosophy for osteopathy. Components included the idea that structure and function are interrelated and the importance of each piece of the body as a whole.

The first school of osteopathy was established in London, U.K. in 1917 by John Martin Littlejohn, one of Dr Sill's first graduate. The osteopathic profession was finally recognised in 1993. This legislation now provides the profession of osteopathy the same legal framework of statutory self-regulation as other healthcare such as medicine and dentistry.

During that time, in the U.S., the American Medical Association listed DO's as "cultists" and deemed MD consultation of DOs unethical from 1923 until 1962. Osteopathic treatments were regarded as "pseudoscientific dogma".

In the late 50's, osteopathy in the US developed in parallel to medicine and dropped its reliance on spinal manipulation to treat illness. Osteopathic medicine in the US is a medical doctor who can prescribe drugs, do surgery and has done 200 hours in manipulation techniques.

A visionary of osteopathic medicine was Irvin Korr, who stated, referring to the concept of bodily unity: "the person is the environment in which parts exist and operate". He added that a person's lifestyle and experiences are factors capable of influencing every single cell, to the point of involving the entire body system. Dr Korr spent 5 decades on his life studying the spine and its direct influence on the nervous system. In 1976, he published a series of papers with many references pointing to the fact that an alteration in a segment or area of the spine absolutely negatively affected nervous system function.

The article was titled "**The spinal cord as the organizer of disease processes**".

Today, many researches in osteopathic manipulation technic have shown to improve spinal ranges of motion, decrease pressure on dorsal root nerves, have an effect on endorphin level, and have an effect on the heart and blood pressure via the vagus nerve.

Over the years, the osteopathic profession has evolved into 2 branches: non-physician manual medicine osteopaths and osteopathic physicians. Although they began originally from the same founder, they are so distinct now that they could function as separate profession. Regulation for non-physician manual medicine osteopath varies greatly between countries. Several international and national organisations exist relating to osteopathic education and political advocacy; the main one being the Osteopathic International Alliance (OIA).

There are many osteopathic schools, universities, colleges, and medical schools that award a recognized osteopathic qualification or an osteopathic medical degree in the world. The degrees of non-medical osteopathy conferred vary widely, and include: Certificates, Diplomas (such as Diploma in Osteopathic Manual Practice - DOMP), Bachelors (such as bachelor of science in osteopathy), Masters (such as master of art in Osteopathic history), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), or Diploma in Osteopathy and a doctorate in osteopathy (D.O.). These non-medical osteopathic degrees are different from an osteopathic medical degree (Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine) that are solely offered by 37 medical schools in the United States. All 37 US osteopathic medical schools are listed as *medical schools* in the World Directory of Medical Schools, since they confer the D.O.

The difference in philosophies

In 1896, D.D. Palmer's first descriptions and underlying philosophy of chiropractic was strikingly like Andrew Still's principles of osteopathy. Both professed the use of spinal manipulation on joint dysfunction to improve health; chiropractors dubbed this lesion "subluxation" which interfered with the nervous system. Osteopaths diagnose and treat "osteopathic lesion".

The osteopathic philosophy revolves around 4 major principles.

- 1) The body is an integrated unit of mind, body, and spirit
- 2) The body possesses self-regulatory mechanisms, having the inherent capacity to defend, repair, and remodel itself
- 3) Structure and function are reciprocally interrelated
- 4) Rational therapy is based on consideration of the first 3 principles.

Dr Still claimed that he could 'shake a child and stop scarlet fever, croup, diphtheria, and cure whooping cough in three days by wring of its neck.

According to the American Osteopathic Association, osteopathic manipulative treatment is only one component of osteopathic medicine and may be used alone or in combination with pharmacotherapy, rehabilitation, surgery, patient education, diet, and exercise.

Palmer always maintained that he didn't treat disease; he only removed the interference on the nervous system to allow the body to heal itself. His philosophy included the metaphysical concept of an Innate Intelligence, which he described as the eternal part of human duality. The emphasis on the role of Innate Intelligence acting through the nervous system to affect the self-regulating, self-healing characteristics of life, however, characterised the biological basis of Palmer's paradigm. Chiropractic adjustment, therefore, was a method of allowing the Innate Intelligence to re-establish self-regulation.

In his sense, chiropractic could be viewed as not just another therapeutic treatment of disease, but rather a means of normalizing neurophysiology, reversing pathophysiology, and creating a state of higher function.

Palmer "contrasts his theories with those of the osteopathic authors. He writes that "the lesion theory of the osteopaths, is not that of a subluxation of the chiropractor. For D.D., the lesion was secondary, and the subluxation was primary.

Application of science epistemology for chiropractic discussion

- Source unknown.

Chiropractic is a clinical science.

It is based on a law of biology that there is existent in the organism an ability to be healthy, and to get well. Often called the law of homeostasis, it is often stated as the ability to be well within itself and within its environment.

It draws on the theory of physiology that the nervous system, composed of the brain, spinal cord, the peripheral nervous system, and the sense organs such as the eye and ear, controls and coordinates all other organs and structures, and relates the individual to his environment.

It hypothesizes a relationship between the integrity or health in the nervous system, and integrity and health in the individual.

It conjectures on the major premise that a loss of body framework integrity can relate to loss of nervous system integrity. These associations of framework dysfunction, and nervous system dysfunction are called subluxations.

The famous debate

Still vs Palmer: A remembrance of the famous debate.

Dynamic Chiropractic-Jan 27, 2003, vol.21/03

Is it true that D.D. Palmer stole chiropractic from A.T. Still?

Here is an extract of the discussion recorded by Dr L Ted Frigard DC PHC and BJ Palmer.
It is nowhere in written literature. Possibly April 1955.

Dr Still: "I founded osteopathy in 1874. It is based on the manipulation of the bones of the spine to allow the blood to flow smoothly and without interruption".

D.D. Palmer: "I founded chiropractic in 1895. It is based on the fundamental of the specific adjustment of the subluxated bones of the spine to free impinged nerves and allow nerve impulses to flow to the body without interruption.

Dr Still: "I am a physician".

D.D. Palmer: "I am not a physician".

Dr Still retaliated: "I was a medical doctor long before I founded osteopathy. About 30 years ago, I began to realize the power of nature to cure after a skillful manipulation of conditions to allow

pure and healthy blood to flow into the diseased area. I began to treat diseases by osteopathic means- and obtained good results.

D.D. Palmer: “I was not a medical doctor before I founded chiropractic. Therefore, my mind was not burdened with medical theories. Chiropractic had no previous theories to wrestle with. It deals with the life force which flows over the nervous system. This power flows from the brain over the nerves as an impulse. This is the primary source of life and health.

Dr Still persisted, “the source of energy within the body is the dark red fluid called blood. Pure blood is essential to good health”.

“The source of energy is the vital force which flows over the nervous system,” countered Palmer. “Nerves control all function, including the musculature of the arterial walls, which controls the force and flow of blood by contracting and relaxing. The body is controlled by nerves, not blood. If the fundamental principles of chiropractic and osteopathy are different, time will tell which is correct and will survive.

Conclusion

Palmer was not alone in hypothesizing a metaphysical relationship between bodily structure, function, and health. The parallels between Palmer’s philosophy and Still’s are notable. Still’s philosophy stresses organization (order) as a necessary condition of life. Palmer established a substance dualism (spirit-body), united by intellectual (life-the soul) is the basis of this science of biology, and nerve tension (tone) is the basis of functional activity in health and disease.

The mind-body relationship is a pillar of wellness in the philosophy of chiropractic and osteopathy. By locating the musculoskeletal area that is functioning improperly, one can correct dysfunction at its root rather than treat symptoms with invasive drugs and chemicals. This naturopathic model of healing and wellness encourages a healthy lifestyle and longevity of optimal health as a result.

Chiropractic and osteopathic care uphold the belief that the body maintains an inborn ability to self-regulate and maintain health. This is known as “innate intelligence” and is considered to flow through the body.

Understanding the centrality of the spine’s structure is necessary for optimal functionality of the whole body. For this reason, it is believed that when the spine is mispositioned or misaligned, the spinal nerves functions and its affected tissues are disrupted. This disruption can cause an endless of health problems, not limited to, but including the manifestation of physical discomfort and pain. As the body naturally looks for balance throughout its functioning systems, and a healthy relationship and communication within the full body is essential to wellness as a whole.

Vitalism is the basis for the development of the naturopathic principle *Vis medicatrix naturae* and the theories *Vital Force* and the *Theory of Vitality*.

Holism is considered the basis for development of the naturopathic principle *Treat the whole person* and for the naturopathic theories *Integration of the Individual* and *Naturopathic Triad of Health*.

It is these approaches to integrative wellness care that sets chiropractic and osteopathy apart from other branches of modern medicine. Holism is self-contained as its own set of philosophical perspectives but is centered on the idea that wellness is dependent on the integration of body, mind, and spirit and deviation from this natural, balanced state of being can result in pain and illness. This naturopathic approach to care therefore does not depend on treatment with invasive surgery, prescription drugs, or other chemical interventions that can further disrupt this natural, intimate relationship. Instead, holistic medicine places trust in the understanding of the natural world and the human body's ability to function optimally when these relationships are recognized and honored. Incorporating vitalism into chiropractic care perspectives, the philosophy of chiropractic affirms an encouragement of the body's natural functionality through full-body wellness and a long, healthy lifestyle.

On the other hand, traditional medicine healthcare philosophy of **reductionism** divides explanations of event into multiple different components by analysing the simple, most basic constituents.

Chiropractic and osteopathy practice more and more toward a reductionism mentality. Patients are bombarded by ads, promotions, T.V. commercials and more to search for quick fix to feel better rapidly. More and more practitioners, afraid of losing clients, abide with the demand and "relieve" symptoms. By the time the patient comes to the clinic, he has gone to other professionals to relieve the symptoms. Traditionally, chiropractors and osteopath were working to restore body balance and health with the help of manipulation.

It is my observation that, today, chiropractors concentrate on the musculoskeletal system and don't apply or don't believe in the subluxation philosophy anymore. There is a constant debate amongst chiropractors to recognise innate and the subluxation philosophy, therefore the "straight" and "mixers" debate continues.

To conclude, it is my opinion that both professions are heading in the same direction as all other therapists who treat musculoskeletal conditions (symptoms) by spinal adjustment/manipulation/massage and/or other methods. Originally, chiropractic and osteopathic philosophies agreed that the body was an entity capable of self-healing if proper natural therapy was utilised. Today, both philosophies have mostly disappeared in practice but, I believe, the population will always seek the truth when wellness is explained to them in their search to natural healthcare.

For both to survive this world of 'relief care' treatment, the one who remains close to the original philosophy will separate themselves from the others who *treat the symptom that the patient has rather than treating the patient who has the symptom*.

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