

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF CHIROPRACTORS

POSITION STATEMENTS

Evidence-based practice

In the UK, the General Chiropractic Council requires chiropractors to select and apply appropriate evidence-based care, where the latter is defined as clinical practice that incorporates the best available care evidence from research, the expertise of the chiropractor and the preference of the patient (General Chiropractic Council, 2016).

It is the RCC's position that chiropractors should:

- apply a biopsychosocial approach to patient management;
- ensure patients are actively involved in shared decision-making and are supported to make fully informed choices about their care;
- offer a package of care that may include advice, information, exercise, manual therapies and psychosocial interventions;
- facilitate and support patients to engage in appropriate self-management strategies;
- refer and/or co-manage patients as appropriate.

Reference

General Chiropractic Council (2016) The Code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for chiropractors. pp17, 29. <https://www.gcc-uk.org/UserFiles/Docs/Education/Amended%20Code%20Final%20-6.8.18.pdf>

Public health

Public health is about helping people to stay healthy and protecting them from threats to their health (Health Education England). Chiropractors have an important part to play in supporting public health by helping individuals make healthy lifestyle choices, the impact of which may extend to their families and the wider community. Chiropractors can do this by providing specific support and advice where they are competent to do so, i.e. in areas such as exercise, weight control and quitting smoking, and/or by signposting individuals to reliable information and resources.

Immunisation is an important area of public health which is outside the scope of chiropractic competence, however chiropractors should help ensure that patient safety and public trust in immunisation is fostered by highlighting the value of vaccines and by signposting patients to trusted sources of information, such as NHS.UK, recognising that misinformation has the potential to endanger lives and can have a detrimental effect on public health.

References

Health Education England <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-public-health/what-public-health>
NHS.UK <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/>

Scope of Practice

In the UK, The General Chiropractic Council requires that chiropractors recognise and work within the limits of their own knowledge, skills and competencies.

It is the RCC's position that:

- a chiropractor's scope of practice is defined by their personal knowledge, skills and competencies;
- a chiropractor's scope of practice may develop as a result of their achieving further qualifications and participating in appropriate professional development activities;
- as regulated healthcare professionals, chiropractors should have the opportunity to develop and extend their scope of practice to enable them to best serve the patients in the private or NHS clinical setting in which they practice.

Use of diagnostic imaging, including X-ray

In the UK, all chiropractors graduate with the knowledge and skills to refer for diagnostic imaging and to interpret the outcomes of imaging investigations and reports. Some chiropractors graduate with the skills and competencies to produce imaging reports.

Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (2017, 2018) set out the statutory responsibilities of duty-holders for radiation protection, and the basic safety standards that duty-holders must meet and some chiropractors graduate as competent to undertake any or all of the duties of Referrer, Practitioner, Operator and/or Employer in respect of diagnostic X-ray. Other chiropractors may gain these competencies in a postgraduate setting.

It is the RCC's position that diagnostic imaging should only be used where indicated by best evidence and thus, in respect of non-specific low back pain, diagnostic imaging is not routinely indicated.

References

Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1322/contents/made>
Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/121/contents/made>