

# Queen's chiropractic practice-based research network: preliminary results

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## Background

Practice-based research in the chiropractic profession is desperately needed. Chiropractic is traditionally an under-researched profession and there is only scant reliable information available for even the most fundamental aspects of chiropractic clinical practice, including who seeks the care of chiropractors, for what reasons and what care is provided. The objectives of this study were to 1) Develop a practice based research network (PBRN) of chiropractors in the Queen's University region; and 2) Conduct practice-based research in the PBRN to better understand the nature of chiropractic members' clinical practice.

## Methods

We invited 20 chiropractors to participate in the PBRN. Chiropractors recorded consecutive patient encounters on hand written paper encounter forms until 100 encounters were recorded, or when four weeks recording had elapsed. Three inter-related data collections were undertaken including chiropractor characteristics, encounter data, and patient characteristics. Data were analyzed using summary statistics and adjusted for clustering.

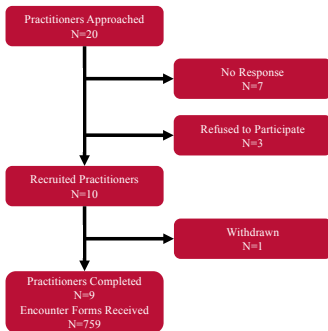


Figure 1: Flowchart of Chiropractor Participation

The image shows a detailed encounter form with multiple sections for patient information, symptoms, and treatment. It includes checkboxes for various conditions and a grid for recording dates.

Figure 2: Encounter Form

## Results

### Chiropractor Participants (Figures 1 and 4)

Study participants were similar to all chiropractors in Ontario, Canada, with respect to sex distribution. Chiropractors who completed the study differed with respect to age, with a mean age of 39 years compared to 45 years of all Ontario chiropractors.

### Patients (Figure 3)

- The majority (68%) of patients between the ages of 25 to 64.
- In 54% of encounters the patient was female.
- 95% of encounters were by patients previously seen by the chiropractor.

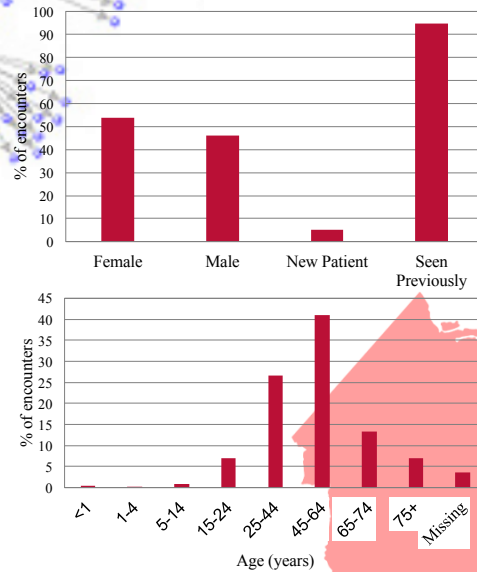


Figure 3: Characteristics of Patients Seen

Chiropractor Characteristics	Mean	Range
Age in years	39	28 – 56
Years in practice	12	2 – 30
Number of patient care hours worked each week	12	2 – 23
Number of patients seen each week	36	7 – 70
	Number	%
Female	3	33
Male	6	67
Graduated in Canada	6	67
Holds postgraduate qualification	4	44
Involved in teaching	1	11
Solo practitioner	2	22
Consults in a language other than English	2	22

Figure 4: Chiropractor Characteristics

### Encounters (Figures 5 to 7)

- The most frequent problem managed by participating chiropractors was back syndrome without radiating pain (20%).
- 88% of encounters were due to musculoskeletal complaints.
- the most common forms of care provided were soft tissue therapy (68%), manual adjustment (57%), and mobilization (47%).

Problems Managed	No. per 100 encounters (n=1012)
Back syndrome without radiating pain	20.34
Back symptom/complaint	12.93
Neck syndrome	12.54
Sprain/strain of joint	8.29
Back syndrome with radiating pain	5.92

Figure 5: Five Most Frequent Problems

Reasons for Encounter	No. per 100 encounters (n=1018)
Musculoskeletal	88.12
General	7.37
Neurological	3.93
Circulatory	0.20
Skin	0.20

Figure 6: Top Five Reasons for Encounter by ICPC Chapter

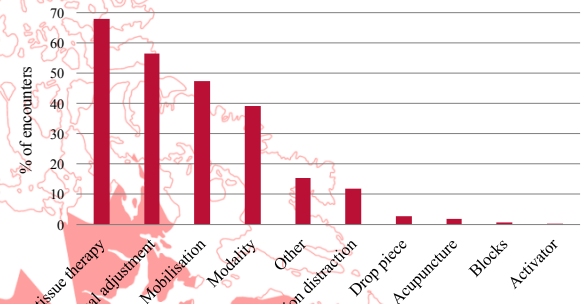


Figure 7: Distribution of Techniques and Care Provided

## Discussion

Increasing practice-based research in the chiropractic profession is essential, and the PBRN model may facilitate this. This first step to understand the chiropractor and patient profile of members within the network will lead to opportunities to conduct further research projects within the network.