

A Student Focus Group on Evidence-Based Practice

Dana J. Lawrence, DC, MMedEd

Palmer College of Chiropractic

Kristi Ferguson, PhD

University of Iowa

Preeti Satyanarayana, MD, MPH

Palmer College of Chiropractic

Conflict of Interest Statement

- **The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:**
 - **None to declare**

Purpose

- To determine general attitudes, knowledge and skills of student leaders in evidence-based practice as well as the challenges of educating faculty sponsors and club/organization members about evidenced-based practice.

Participants

- 13 people in total
 - 7 student leaders
 - Beacon newspaper, Activator Club, Blair Club, Motion Palpation Club, Pediatrics Club, Gonstead Club, and the Palmer Student Alumni Foundation
 - 6 Faculty Sponsors

Process

- Introduction to session
- Informal discussion
- Background information on R25 grant project
- Confidential
 - No names to be attached to any comment in any report
- Conversation led by Dr. Kristi Ferguson
 - Monitored by Dr. Preeti Satyanarayana
- Project was ruled exempt by the Palmer IRB Chair

Introductory Questions

- Discussion today will be about EBP
- How would you define EBP?
- Have any of you had any training in EBP?
- To what extent, if any, have you been involved in EBP in the past?
- Do you feel this is a fad or will it be an important part of your daily practice when you graduate? Can you let me know why?

Transition Questions

- How would or does EBP apply to the technique you are involved with?
- How comfortable would you be in using EBP as part of that form of technique?
- What do you see as the benefits and disadvantages to the use of EBP?
- Do you feel there is too little or too much evidence available to support the use of your technique (or the profession, for the Beacon and SC representatives)?

Key Questions for Club Leaders

- Would you be willing to add EBP principles to the meetings your club has?
- Would you be willing to participate in training sessions about EBP?
- What are some of the skills or knowledge you believe that you would need to effectively use EBP?
- What are some of the challenges you would face in adding EBP to your club meetings?
- Do you see any way that these could be overcome?

Key Questions for Faculty Sponsors

- Would you be willing to participate in training sessions of EBP?
- How do you see yourself helping club leadership add EBP principles to their meetings?

Ending Questions

- Do you feel that using EBP principles will help your technique be better accepted in the profession?
- Do feel that using EBP principles will help you to get ahead in practice?
- Do you care about EBP?
- Do you have any other comments about EBP?

How would you define EBP?

- **Summary Points**

- Ranges from case study reports to peer-reviewed journal publications
- Sometimes clinical questions can lead towards EBP
- EBP does not always mean reading literature and following it to the word
- Being informed with the current research and current thoughts
- Certain beliefs can be proved or disproved with EBP; EBP is dynamic
- Disbelief that double-blinded studies are the only ones that contribute to EBP
- EBP helps to continually grow the profession and contribute toward its progress
- Use both evidence and the best clinical knowledge available to teach

Have any of you had any training in EBP?

- **Summary Points**

- Few seminars on EBP were available to students in the Master's program in clinical research

To what extent, if any, have you been involved in EBP in the past?

- **Summary Points**

- To make clinical decisions, deal with 3rd party payers and teach students
- Clinical outcome assessment instruments are used to measure clinical and patient outcomes
- Chiropractic care indicators are available to help come to a clinical diagnosis
- Use EBP to measure reliability and validity of techniques and procedures
- Guidelines laid down by experts is also used as evidence in teaching and clinical practice
- There is a wide range of use and interpretation of EBP at Palmer college due to a variety of background of the faculty and staff

- Students are good at questioning the use of evidence presented to them by the faculty
- Students take EBP seriously
- EBP is presented vastly in some classes and techniques as compared to the others
- Palmer includes a wide range of evidence presented to the students
- Different chiropractic colleges focus differently on teaching EBP to their students

Do you feel this will be an important part of your practice in the future?

● **Summary Points**

- EBP helps better serve patients in terms of evaluating their condition, perform clinical examination and to come to a diagnosis and treatment
- EBP provides a variety of options that can be used for patient care
- EBP helps progress things forward and hence learn new things
- Provides information on current news, drugs and drug interactions, provides opportunity to be involved in research with the various chiropractic organizations
- EBP helps with publishing
- Not much of evidence is easily available to the chiropractors compared to medical doctors. This availability is complicated by the increased cost to access journals and databases
- About 5 to 10% of students do not believe in EBP

How would EBP apply to the technique you are involved with?

- **Summary Points**

- Some techniques fund research projects and are open toward publishing the results
- Charismatic personnel present the evidence in their technique very well and try to back it up
- Students are involved in technique clubs
- Not enough studies are available on any single technique to come up with enough evidence, but this help students critically evaluate the existing literature
- Research done at a research institution and that done by a sponsoring technique organization are different in terms of study structure and execution, which in turn impacts the validity of the study results
- Technique organizations sponsor seminars and diplomate programs that focus on research projects and EBP

Common Themes

- Alumni find EBP very complicated and very volatile and are concerned that it will affect their ability to make a living
- Evidence-based practice refers to more than simply reading journal articles
- Some departments in the college do a better job of disseminating literature than others do; the chiropractic department was singled out as doing a good job while life sciences were singled out as not doing so
- There is general perception among students that there is conflict between what is done in teaching and how information is later used by students
- Many participants felt that there is no consensus about what EBP means to the greater profession
- No student felt that they had received formal training in EBP methods or procedures

Common Themes

- Students feel fairly confident and comfortable critically appraising journal articles
- There are differences in approaches and levels of understanding among the branch campuses
- EBP will be part of the general practice of participants
- An impediment to EBP is the vast amount of information that is available
- There is a risk that research can be used for political ends
- The technique organizations represented here have all participated in providing research to the profession

Future Work

- Survey of the student body on their attitudes
- Development of a student Early Adopters Group
- Curricular change
- Student journal club

Thank you!