

Malta Chiropractic Association Policy Statement

Please note: The information provided in this document does not constitute, and is no substitute for, legal or other professional advice.

1 GENERAL STATEMENT

The Malta Chiropractic Association, MCA, was established in 2013 to bring together professional and public goals providing benefits and services that will enhance professional development and public understanding. It also represents and promotes the interests of chiropractic, chiropractors and the patients they serve through advocacy, research and education.

This document presents:

- the MCA's standpoint on the chiropractic profession and its development in Malta,
- the MCA's position on issue affecting the public health,
- the MCA's contribution to help the Maltese citizen's right to access safe & effective health advise.

The MCA Code of Ethics is based upon the fundamental principles of moral and professional behavior. The MCA recommends these principles be guiding factors for doctors of chiropractic, student and associate members, and that they follow and uphold this Code of Ethics at all times to ensure the dignity and integrity of the chiropractic profession.

2 CHIROPRACTIC

2.1 Standards

The MCA was found to set up standards of ethical, technical and professional excellence as guidelines for the Doctor of Chiropractic.

Chiropractic is a primary health profession concerned with the diagnosis, treatment and management of musculoskeletal conditions, mainly affecting articulations and muscles of the spine, which result in painful and undesirable lifestyle.

Chiropractic is a science and as such, it is based upon sound academic knowledge. The Doctor of Chiropractic is trained in physical, clinical, laboratory, analytical and diagnostic procedures, as well as in the monitoring of body functions thus enabling him, or her, to responsibly and effectively care for his/her patient in health and disease, to engage in timely consultation with other health care professionals, and to refer and accept referrals when in the patients' best interest.

The primary obligation of Doctors of Chiropractic is to provide the highest quality of care to each patient within the confines of their education and their legal authority. As a result, the MCA holds doctors of chiropractic to be considered as the portal of entry to mainstream health care through the mean of referral and team work.

Chiropractic, and its professionals, do not include in its/their practices any form of allopathic or homeopathic pharmaceutical prescription or surgery.

The MCA will safeguard the right to use the title of chiropractor, in Malta, by solely accepting duly qualified applicants who graduated from accredited institutions throughout the world.

2.2 Education

The MCA abides to International Standards of chiropractic education, consisting of at least four (4) years of academic and clinical training at an accredited chiropractic university.

The MCA will grant temporary membership to chiropractor qualified, (or in the case of student membership, currently attending students) from colleges awaiting accreditation status. This may be susceptible to changes depending on the accreditation outcome.

2.3 Clinical Applications

Clinical application of chiropractic include:

- spinal manipulation, although various other skeletal articulation may also be manipulated,
- a range of muscular stretches, such as post-isometric relaxation and dynamic stretches,
- rehabilitation programs such as muscular training and flexibility exercises,
- soft tissue work, such as muscle stripping and cross friction,
- interpretation of musculoskeletal x-ray, for condition such a Degenerative Joint Diseases (DJD), spondylolisthesis, Paget disease, and more,
- provide a realistic prognosis and sensible patient counseling,
- referral to other health professional when considered necessary for the patient's interest.

Muscle sprain and strains are sources of pain due to irritation of the myriads of pain receptors within joints and muscle belly and their attachments. Chiropractic has been shown to stimulate such pain receptors resulting in effective relief/decrease pain levels through the use of spinal adjustment/manipulation. This is the standpoint of the MCA.

It is a basic responsibility of the chiropractor to:

1. determine the appropriate case management,
2. to monitor the effectiveness of care,

2.4 Patient Recruitment

The MCA feels that public education, various methods of practice promotion and, perhaps, advertising are viable methods of recruiting patients.

However, the MCA firmly condemn false advertising and/or recruitment through the dissipation of misleading information delivered to the suffering patient. The MCA considers this kind of behavior highly unethical and contrary to the interest of the consumer, the chiropractic profession and the insurance system, if any.

The MCA guarantee strict collaboration with the Local Enforcement Laws in order to protect the public by recognizing, and stopping, these repulsive activities which will modify the public perception and, ultimately, damage the profession as a whole.

2.5 Clinical Terminology

No allusion should be made by any of its members to the word subluxation or misalignment, unless otherwise showed by investigative imaging such as X-ray, or MRI.

The MCA holds that such reference has been the cause of professional indignity and embarrassment worldwide and detaches from such 'religious', non-scientific belief.

However, reference to joint restriction and/or muscle hypertonicity, may be adopted after a

detailed physical/chiropractic examination has been carried out by a qualified practitioner.

2.6 Diagnostic Tools & Techniques

The MCA feels obliged to deny the use, by its members, of any diagnostic tools for which the practitioner has no valid accredited qualification and for which the scope of practice is not encompassed by the chiropractic profession.

However, duly qualified Doctors of Chiropractic who wish to use their own preferred therapeutic methods are free to do so, as long as in the patient's best interest.

2.7 Prepaid Plans

The MCA condemns the adoption of prepaid treatment plans.

2.8 X-Ray and Radiation Safety

The appropriate programme units of Master of Chiropractic (MChiro) includes standard requirements under the provision of the regulations described within the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000 and the (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

Chiropractors undergo three years of investigative imaging learning, from an introductory evaluation of spinal and extremities radiographs to then proceed to localization, identification and categorization of abnormal findings in order to gain skills to confidently diagnose a range of common conditions pertinent to those topics.

The MCA absolutely recommends that chiropractors stay within their scope of practice when using radiation exposure following the ALARA principle, (As Low As Reasonably Achievable).

Being considered a medico-legal document, the MCA holds that no members are allowed to alter, scrape and/or omit details in such records through the use of marking pencils/pen.

3 MEMBER'S BEHAVIOR

Members of the MCA must, at all times, adopt a leading example of personal, social and professional behavior. Any claims will be dealt with confidentially and privately.

3.1 Romantic involvement

The MCA has no adverse tendency toward romantic involvement of patient and chiropractor, however it strongly recommends that the practitioner immediately informs the Committee Board and refers the patient to another colleague for continued care.

3.2 Illegal Action/s

The MCA does not accept membership from any previously accused of, or with current pending result for, illegal conduct.

The MCA holds that his member carry an exemplar attitude towards colleagues and patients alike. Any member witnessing an illegal act must report it to the MCA Executive Board immediately so that the Board may decide the appropriate actions.

Members found guilty on this matter will be immediately expelled from the association and reported to the Local Authorities. Expelled members will lose all rights within the association.

3.3 Sexual Harassment

The MCA will condemn any behavior as to undermine patients with the use of sexual favors. Any such cases should be reported to the MCA Committee Board immediately.

The Executive Committee shall collect all available evidence and take the required action.

The MCA takes any/all such implications very seriously

3.4. Criminal Record

The MCA may require that applications will be produced together with a clear criminal record, prior to membership consideration..

The MCA holds that Privacy & Confidentiality is a priority, as a result no third parties will be contacted while dealing with an applicant's documents.

3.5 Discriminating and Unethical behavior

The MCA holds that diversity of sexual and/or racial orientation, political and/or religious preferences and physical ability are not to affect the outcome of a treatment plan or an advisory consultation, nor the patients should be dealt with differently.

The MCA holds that misleading patients into false or unjustified expectations of favorable results of treatment is highly unethical. Furthermore, doctors of chiropractic should never misrepresent their education, credentials, professional qualification or scope of clinical ability when communicating with the patient.