

Review of: "Changing chiropractic's subluxation rhetoric: Moving on from 'deniers', 'vitalists', and 'unorthodox', to realists, post-realists, and absurdists"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Dr. Ebrall has been doing work in this area for several years now. In essence, he wades into an ongoing internecine argument between the poles of the profession- the conservative and vitalistic right, and the liberal and evidence-based left. I use these terms with some dismay, for they do not actually capture either side.

When it comes down to it, Ebrall simply argues that professional debate would serve the profession better than ongoing vitriol and attempts to Other the opposing side. Each sides effectively wishes to destroy the other side, mirroring ongoing actions that occur in the social media world. And this fight takes places largely in that arena.

What is clever here is the use of postmodern philosophical approaches to grounding this argument. What is missing here is the fact that the vast majority of chiropractors are not absurdists on either side- the middle ground cannot give up subluxation due to legal and regulatory reasons, as well as clinical reimbursement patterns. This is not the worry of researchers, who largely comprise the outspoken evidence-based side, yet do not practice and do not understand the forces affecting those who do. On the other hand, the subluxation-supporters do so in the absence of strong evidence, yet cannot be swayed from belief, which is central to their identity.

Ebrall rightly points out the negativity of the recent paper by Innes and LeBouef-Yde. I was a reviewer of that paper and heavily criticized its approach, to no avail as per the final printed copy.

One issue I have here is Ebrall's continued attack on the World Federation of Chiropractic. I do not think it poses the threats he mentions, nor does it represent the motivations of the far-left post-realists on chiropractic, nearly all of whom are researchers and not educators. I think this is a point worth mentioning. Who are the thought leaders in education in chiropractic? The researchers have a platform via their publications and the use of the research for marketing purposes. But they are not the ones driving change in the profession. That is emerging from our political leaders, who work to create better reimbursement for practitioners, doing sensitive work at the state and national levels. We should not give the

research community (and I am a member) more credit than they deserve.

Be careful with language. An example is the phrase “self-important elitist group.” The “self-important” is unnecessary and provocative; thus, not needed.

Finally, the last statement in the paper, that we move ahead with debate, is largely missing from the paper itself. I think a section should be added in which this is fleshed out so that it can be operational.