



CALIFORNIA CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION

## **Comparison of the Education of Doctors of Chiropractic And Medical Doctors**

Upon successful completion of the undergraduate studies, those students who are accepted to a chiropractic college enter a 4-5 year academic program, which is similar in content to medical school. Course work includes an in-depth study of anatomy, physiology, pathology, neurology, radiology, biomechanics, spinal adjustive techniques, including a variety of other health-related areas.

Although the undergraduate and classroom instruction are similar, medical doctors are required to participate in rotations starting in the third year of medical school. This is when the student receives hands-on experience in the various specialties of medicine, such as pediatrics, internal medicine, surgery and emergency medicine, to name a few. Doctors of chiropractic also receive hands-on experience as part of their college curriculum. Additionally, in their final year of college chiropractic students undergo an eight month externship treating patients under the supervision of a licensed doctor of chiropractic proctor in a clinical setting.

Both chiropractic and medical schools require certain course work for admission. These vary from school to school. Very few schools of either type require a bachelor's degree, although some specify that they prefer the applicant have such a degree. Chiropractic colleges do not require the MCAT. Some medical schools do. Contrary to common belief, some medical schools (including high profile institutions) require the bare minimum of undergraduate requirements. We took the admission requirements for medical schools from the publication titled: Medical School Admission Requirements, 1997-1998: United States and Canada, 47th edition (published by The Association of American Medical Colleges). Admission requirements for accredited chiropractic schools are dictated by the Council on Chiropractic Colleges (the agency appointed by the U.S. Dept. of Education to accredit chiropractic colleges).

Chiropractic school involves between 400-to-600 more classroom hours than medical school. This was shown by two studies in the 1970s. The Parker College study more recently reported that on average, chiropractic college involves 372 more classroom hours than medical school. Chiropractic students also have more hours of training in anatomy, physiology, diagnosis, and orthopedics (the musculoskeletal system). It should be apparent from looking at the data below that in general; the chiropractic student has a more extensive classroom education in these areas, particularly in diagnosis, than the medical student.

## Requirements for Admission to Chiropractic and Medical Schools

### Parker College of Chiropractic

Biological Science (with lab).....1 year  
General or Inorganic Chemistry  
(with lab).....1 year  
Organic Chemistry (with lab).....1 year  
Physics (with lab).....1 year  
English or Communicative Skills...2 years  
Psychology.....1/2 year  
Humanities or Social Sciences.....Not  
less than 15 semester hours, or 22.5  
quarter hours  
Electives.....From 4-to-12 semester  
hours, or from 6-to-18 quarter hours

### Harvard Medical School

Biology (with lab).....1 year  
General or Inorganic Chemistry  
(with lab).....1 year  
Organic Chemistry (with lab).....1 year  
Physics (with lab).....1 year  
Mathematics (calculus).....1 year  
Expository Writing.....1 year

### Stanford University School of Medicine

Biology (with lab).....1 year  
Chemistry, including organic (with lab)..2 years  
Physics (with lab).....1 years

### Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Biological Science (with lab).....8 semester  
hours  
General or Inorganic Chemistry  
(with lab).....8 semester  
hours  
Organic Chemistry (with lab)..... 8 semester  
hours  
Physics (with lab).....8 semester  
hours  
Humanities or Social Sciences.....24 semester  
hours  
Mathematics (calculus).....4 semester  
hours

## **Degree Requirements**

These basic educational requirements for graduates of both chiropractic and medical schools show that although each has its own specialties, the hours of classroom instruction are about the same. (The class hours for basic science comparisons were compiled and averaged following a review of curricula of 18 chiropractic colleges and 22 medical schools, based on the 1988-1989 Association of American Medical College Curricula.<sup>1</sup>)

### **Minimum Required Classroom Hours - Chiropractic College vs. Medical College**

<b>Chiropractic College Hours</b>	<b>Subject Matter</b>	<b>Medical College Hours</b>
456	Anatomy & Embryology	215
243	Physiology	174
296	Pathology	507
61	Chemistry	100
145	Microbiology	145
408	Diagnosis	113
149	Neurology	171
271	X-Ray	13
56	Psychology & Psychiatry	323
66	Obstetrics & Gynecology	284
168	Orthopedics	2
<b>Total Hours for Degree</b>		
<b>Chiropractic = 2,419    Medical = 2,047</b>		

<sup>1</sup>Published by Parker College of Chiropractic, 2500 Walnut Hill, Dallas, Texas 75229, (214) 438-6932.

## **College Accreditation**

The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) is the agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education for accreditation of programs and institutions offering the doctor of chiropractic degree. The CCE college & curriculum standards are available on line here: <http://www.cce-usa.org/Publications.html>.

## **Licensing and Postgraduate Education**

The doctor of chiropractic must pass three levels of national board exams and a physical therapy exam to be eligible to sit for state board examinations. State board exams involve both written examination and oral practical exams involving clinical practice and x-ray interpretation.

After graduation, the DC may undergo postgraduate training to become board certified as a chiropractic radiologist, neurologist, orthopedist, internist, family practitioner, sports medicine, rehabilitation specialists, clinical nutritionist, or pain management specialist. Medical doctors also may become board certified. Options such as surgery are open to medical and osteopathic physicians. Board certification is not necessary for either type of doctor become licensed and to practice. Chiropractic doctors are currently required to obtain 24 continuing education units each year for license renewal.