



Quarterly World Report

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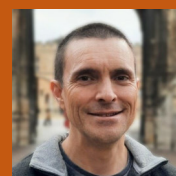


Clinician-scientist appointed as new research chair

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In-depth interview with Petra Schweinhardt

Dr Petra Schweinhardt is the newly appointed head of chiropractic at the University of Zurich. On behalf of the QWR, the Swiss Association of Chiropractors sat down to find out more about Professor Schweinhardt and her vision for chiropractic in Switzerland.

ChiroSuisse congratulates Petra Schweinhardt, MD PhD, on her appointment as Associate Professor of Chiropractic Medicine at Balgrist University Hospital. ChiroSuisse is delighted with her appointment and wanted to know from her how she now approaches everyday professional life and what her strategy is for teaching chiropractic.

Question: Petra, congratulations on your appointment! Until now, you were Head of Research in Chiropractic Medicine at Balgrist University Hospital. What will you tackle first as Associate Professor of Chiropractic Medicine and how will your professional life change?

Petra Schweinhardt: Thank you for the congratulations! I'll start with the second part of the question: When I took over the overall directorship of the Department of Chiropractic Medicine at Balgrist University Hospital ad interim in March of this year, my professional routine changed a lot at that time.

In addition to my duties as Head of Research and my work as a junior house officer in the chiropractic teaching clinic, I am now also responsible for the overall management of the department. With the beginning of the professorship, mainly university tasks are now added, including the internal and external representation of the chair.

One of the first things I completed was to restructure our department to reflect our four core areas organizationally. These four core areas are: the study program, the teaching clinic, the polyclinic and research. There are different 'first tasks' in each of the four core areas. A basic



principle I follow is to intensify the exchange between the four areas.

What will change for chiropractic students? Are you introducing new modules in the course?

First of all, I would like to state that the study program is working very well and there is no reason for drastic action.

Of course, I want to further develop the study program and set new focus: On the one hand, my team and I plan to further develop the methods for teaching manual techniques.

In this area, there are great possibilities to enrich the teaching with technical gadgets and to support motor learning, e.g. through immediate visual feedback of the force-time profile of a manual impulse applied by the practitioner.

In addition, we would like to anchor the topic of 'pain' longitudinally in the curriculum. And we will also give more space to the topic of

In-depth interview with Petra Schweinhardt (continued)

professionalism and ethics. The new catalog of teaching objectives provides us with the framework, and since we are in the middle of implementing it, we can start directly with these projects.

You studied human medicine in Germany and completed your doctorate in the field of child and adolescent psychiatry. How did you get into chiropractic? Where do you see interfaces between mental health and chiropractic?

I have been doing pain research for a long time, with a focus on 'mind-body medicine'. I have been increasingly disturbed by the fact that musculoskeletal pain is the largest group of complaints leading to a reduction in quality of life, and at the same time relatively few breakthroughs have been made in our understanding of these types of pain. This, combined with the traditional holistic, patient-centered approach of chiropractic, in which I find a lot of 'mind-body medicine', ultimately led me to study chiropractic medicine as well.

The most important interface between chiropractic and mental health, in my opinion, lies in the nature of pain itself. Mental processes influence the experience of pain to a



Balgrist University Hospital, University of Zurich

considerable extent, in each of us. Thus, in principle, they should always be kept in mind when a practitioner encounters a patient with pain. How important these mental processes are then depends on the individual case.

You have been a member of the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) for about 10 years and have also received an award for pain research. In which area do you want to deepen the research on chiropractic at Balgrist?

We have two main areas of research: firstly, the development and maintenance of back pain, with a focus on the interaction between higher centers of the nervous system and the tissues in the periphery, and secondly, the mechanisms of action of chiropractic treatment methods.

ChiroSuisse represents practically all chiropractors working in Switzerland. How do you envisage future cooperation? How can you ensure that research also directly benefits chiropractors in practice?

I strive for constructive cooperation at eye level. We would like to give clinically active chiropractors the opportunity to share topics that they encounter in their clinical everyday life and that they consider as under-researched. In order for this exchange to take place, we would like to establish a forum, for example at the annual congress. Another obvious interface is between undergraduate education, which is the responsibility of our study program, and postgraduate education, which is largely provided by clinically active chiropractors. Here, too, we will actively seek exchange.

How far can future research contribute to the evidence for the effectiveness of chiropractic? What are important statements from research that legitimize the expansion of chiropractic?

Again, I would like to start with the second question. Conservative treatment approaches,

In-depth interview with Petra Schweinhardt (continued)

including patient education, manual methods and active lifestyle guidance, are shown to be effective and cost-efficient for many patients with musculoskeletal pain. These findings already legitimize the expansion of chiropractic, especially if chiropractic consistently implements these three approaches. With regard to the first question, it depends very much on how reductionist one approaches the matter. As I said, it is clear that for many

patients with musculoskeletal complaints a three-part 'package of care' is effective. Whether and to what extent the individual components would be effective if they could be scientifically investigated in double-blind studies are questions to which answers are still pending.

Personal information

Petra Schweinhardt, MD PhD, studied human medicine at the Ruprecht-Karls University in Heidelberg, Germany, and

chiropractic medicine at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. She also holds a PhD ('DPhil') in Neuroscience from the University of Oxford, England. Petra has been working at Balgrist University Hospital since 2016. In 2017, she took over as Head of Research of the Department of Chiropractic Medicine at Balgrist University Hospital. On September 1, 2022 she was appointed Chair of Chiropractic Medicine at Balgrist University Hospital, Zurich.

McTimoney celebrates 50th anniversary with new Madrid campus

McTimoney College of Chiropractic (MCC), part of the College of Health, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

In June graduates from every decade since MCC was formed, as well as current students, attended the birthday celebrations.

Fittingly, in another milestone event, MCC has also announced that it will be opening a new campus in Madrid, Spain, adding to existing campus locations in Abingdon, just outside Oxford in the heart of England and central Manchester in the north of the United Kingdom.

Located in Madrid's University Town district, MCC will be welcoming its pioneer cohort in October 2022.

The Madrid campus will deliver the College's full time Master of Chiropractic (MChiro) program, which is validated by the University of Ulster, a prestigious British University with a strong focus on healthcare and in the top 10 British universities for their research pedigree.

Based on its decade of experience in managing two locations in the UK, MCC is looking forward to



The Madrid campus will be the third teaching location for McTimoney College of Chiropractic

expanding the College and delivering our program in Spain's capital city to help further the development of the chiropractic profession there.

In further developments, a collaboration between the McTimoney College of Chiropractic in Madrid and the Jiménez Díaz Foundation has been announced. The Foundation is internationally renowned and seen as a pioneer in biomedical research.