

Letters to the Editor

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Please include your complete address, e-mail address, and telephone number. Letters should be fewer than 400 words and limited to six references, one table or figure, and three authors.

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Osteopath Is Incorrect Term for Osteopathic Physicians

Original Article: Is Spinal Manipulation an Effective Treatment for Low Back Pain? Yes: Evidence Shows Benefit in Most Patients

Issue Date: April 15, 2012

See additional reader comments at: <http://www.aafp.org/afp/2012/0415/p756.html>

TO THE EDITOR: This editorial incorrectly used the term osteopath to refer to osteopathic physicians. The American Osteopathic Association states that the correct term for these physicians is doctor of osteopathic medicine. Physicians with doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO) degrees are fully credentialed, U.S.-trained physicians who undergo equivalent training as those with doctor of medicine (MD) degrees, but also learn a form of manual therapy known as osteopathic manipulative treatment.¹ Osteopaths practice osteopathy, a separate profession from osteopathic medicine. They are not trained in the United States, and are not physicians.

BRUCE KAUFMAN

Monterey, Calif.

E-mail: Doctork88@aol.com

Author disclosure: No relevant financial affiliations.

REFERENCES

1. American Osteopathic Association. Terminology for reporting on osteopathic medicine. <http://www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/news-and-publications/media-center/Pages/osteopathic-style-guide.aspx>. Accessed May 21, 2013.

IN REPLY: Mr. Kaufman is correct that it is current American Osteopathic Association policy to describe U.S.-trained doctors of osteopathic medicine as osteopathic physicians, because they are fully licensed and trained in manual medicine.¹

That being said, the term osteopath has been the proper term for U.S.-trained osteopathic physicians for more than a century.² Until 2010, most colleges of osteopathic

medicine in the United States awarded diplomas in osteopathy and called their graduates osteopaths upon graduation (myself included).^{2,3} A 2011 American Osteopathic Association resolution further states that the terms osteopath, osteopathy, and osteopathic should be advocated and protected for graduates who have these descriptors on their diplomas (as opposed to osteopathic physician and osteopathic medicine), and will always have historic and sentimental significance.³

JAMES J. ARNOLD, DO

Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

E-mail: james.arnold.3@us.af.mil

Author disclosure: No relevant financial affiliations.

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1. American Osteopathic Association. Policy compendium 2012. H229-A/05. Osteopath and osteopathy - use of the term. <http://www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/about/leadership/Documents/policy-compendium.pdf>. Accessed June 10, 2013.
2. Peterson BE. Major events in osteopathic history. In: Chila AG, ed. *Foundations of Osteopathic Medicine*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia, Pa.: Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2011.
3. American Osteopathic Association. Policy compendium 2012. H291-A/06 - osteopathic term protection. <http://www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/about/leadership/Documents/policy-compendium.pdf>. Accessed June 10, 2013.

Correction

Incorrect dosage of erythromycin ethylsuccinate for treating pharyngitis. The article "Diagnosis and Treatment of Streptococcal Pharyngitis" (March 1, 2009, p. 383) contained an error in Table 3 (p. 387). The dosage of erythromycin ethylsuccinate for treating group A beta-hemolytic streptococcus in adults who are allergic to penicillin should have been 400 mg four times per day or 800 mg two times per day, rather than 50 mg per kg per day in three to four divided doses. The online version of this article has been corrected. ■