

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Distinctively a DO

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"What makes you different as a DO?"

I have heard that question numerous times over the past few decades from my patients, fellow physicians, relatives and the news media. It is a simple question but can be asked in many ways that can sometimes evoke emotional responses from the receiver. It seems that in the past, the osteopathic profession at times has supplied a message of how a DO is much the same as an MD, often to provide credentialing boards, hospital systems and insurance companies the basis to provide equal access to positions and payment parity for the work we do.

As an osteopathic family physician, I sometimes take for granted the unique nature of the DO degree and reinforce the similarities. I remember a study that I did while in a "dually-accredited" residency program that looked to see if DO students maintained their osteopathic identity while in an allopathic predominant teaching environment. One of the difficulties with the study was defining the "osteopathic identity." Students could clearly identify OMM as a physical difference for DO physicians; however, they had more problems defining some of the intangible ideas involved.

In the past month, I have had opportunities to dwell on the differences due to a couple of events. As the President of our state Osteopathic Medical Society, I created a news media presentation about the DO difference. The other event involves OFP applying for a nationally recognized publication identifier. Both events made me have to answer the question at the start of this message in a thoughtful manner that would make sense to everyone.

The osteopathic tenets, doing OMM in clinic and a review of Dr. A.T. Still's sayings made me wonder if there was an easy way to signal the audience's answer. I think that I, as much of our readership, realizes that the DO distinctiveness is a combination of many things and much as we do not limit our treatment of patients to just the disease, being a DO requires an assembly of mind, body and spirit. I hope that this issue of OFP demonstrates this incredible uniqueness that is so intrinsic to our profession.

Celebrate your DO distinctiveness this month and enjoy the OFP March/April 2021 issue! Share how you define your osteopathic identity. #DODifference

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