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La Sapienza (University) starts a new training course for medical graduates
More than one million people use alternative medicine in Rome
By GIANCARLO CALZOLARI

More than one million people in Rome use alternative medicine such as homeopathy, phytotherapy, chiropractic and osteopathy. This phenomenon is increasing all the time and has led doctors at a recent conference in Terni to request that these alternative forms of medicine be practised only by surgeons and graduates in medicine. This is the reason why on 31 October last year the 1st Medicine and Surgery Faculty at La Sapienza University started the "Intensive Training Course in Chiropractic and Osteopathy", organised by Professor Livio Gallotti. The course seems to have aroused great interest, because it opens up new work possibilities for young graduates in medicine who do not have much chance to practise professionally. It was announced by Dr Claudio Cortesini, president of the Rome University faculty of dentistry. He noted the importance of these new possibilities for young doctors, who can enrol on the course and obtain a university diploma qualification. Cortesini said, "As part of the Rome Order of Doctors, we have always been aware of the problems of young people in obtaining professional qualifications; we feel that these new medical possibilities must be carefully monitored – by dentists too, as there are many similarities between the disciplines. The interaction between dentists and chiropractors is more and more evident, for example in the case of dental occlusion. Indeed, 60,000 chiropractors and 20,000 dentists work together in the United States, with excellent results. It was the Rome Order of Doctors that opened up to chiropractors and osteopaths with degrees in medicine and dentistry the possibility of being enrolled on the relevant registers. This is a first, even though it has recently been said that the first to do this was the Cagliari Order; but they began enrolment only recently, whereas the Rome Order began it some years ago". And yet there are not more than 20 professional chiropractors in the entire region. It is clearly a very special form of medicine, with great therapeutic possibilities, given the number of people who suffer from back problems. The experts have stated that only those who have followed a university course abroad – this form of medicine does not exist in Italian universities – usually in America or one of the few European countries that have degree courses can be considered as chiropractors. A series of examinations must be passed based on a total of 5,000 hours of study in order to become a chiropractor. In other words, lessons cannot be "skipped". Eddy Pelissier, president of the Italian Chiropractors Association, highlighted the fact that: "We are aware of our professional capabilities, and we do not want to usurp other categories. In Europe, our profession is recognized by the EU on the basis of general criteria adopted by everyone. For this reason we reject absolutely the idea that a university course taken after a degree in medicine is enough to complete our training properly. And that is not all. The number of unqualified chiropractors is increasing out of all proportion, facilitated by the absence of a law governing the activity. Various places, such as the non-existent Clayton University based in San Marino, issue certificates of participation in chiropractic courses that last a few weekends. This is in no way fair to patients, who have a right to be treated adequately and who should not be misled by these pseudo-chiropractors who could ruin the good reputation of our profession by making mistakes."