

Patient Education

STROKE AND SPINAL MANIPULATION

It cannot be argued that there is an element of risk for everyone who seeks care from a health care provider. Because Chiropractors are primary care physicians and treat a wide range of patients they are not immune to these risks. Unfortunately the risk of experiencing a stroke after a spinal manipulation has been magnified well beyond proportion by the media and other medial practitioners.

The fact is that Chiropractic procedures are among the safest in human health care. In the 65-year period from 1934 to 1999, there are only 37 cases of death known to have occurred from the spinal manipulation with only 19 being related to Chiropractors¹. It has been estimated that the risk of stroke following a spinal manipulation is one in 2 million². The risk of stroke following a spinal manipulation is extremely low when comparing it to known mortality rates in the medical field. Consider the following reported complications from medical treatment.

- 98,000 Americans die each year from medical mistakes³
- 1.5 million people are hospitalized annually due to physician caused reactions⁴
- 1000 people die each week from complications of surgery that was unnecessary⁴
- 1600 children die each year from allergic reactions to aspirin⁴
- Over 100,000 people die every year from unintended drug side effects⁶

The facts speak for themselves. Spinal manipulation as delivered by a Chiropractor is one of the most conservative, least invasive and safest procedures of the health care profession. The risks of spinal manipulation are extremely small when compared to known medical risks. Chiropractors by their training and skill are the best to give this form of healthcare to the public.

¹ Current Concepts in Vertebrobasilar Complications. Allen G.J.Terrett, NCMIC Solutions, 2001

² A Risk Assessment of Cervical Manipulation vs. NSAID's for Treatment of Neck Pain. Dabbs V, Lauretti, J. Manip. Physio. Ther. 1995 (Oct.); 18 (8): 530-6

³ Acts to Reduce Medical Mistakes, Charatan F. Clinton, Brit. Med. J. 2000 (4 Mar); 320:597

⁴ Cervical Chiropractic Man. A Perspective on the Risk of Cerebrovascular Accidents, Rosner AL, Journal of Chiropractic 1994 (May);31(5):31-3

⁵ Journal of the American Medical Association, 2000