

## Risks Associated With Chiropractic Neck Adjustments Media Messages

### Primary Media Messages

- The chiropractic profession has relied on comprehensive research to determine the level of risk associated with chiropractic neck manipulation. A study released in February of this year found that patients are no more likely to suffer a stroke following chiropractic treatment than they would after visiting their family doctor's office. *(see messages specific to the 2008 study from Spine)*
- The chiropractic profession believes that patients have the right to know about the health risks associated with any type of treatment, including chiropractic.
- Scientific studies and expert reviews show that neck manipulation (or chiropractic cervical adjustment) is safe, effective and appropriate for patients with common forms of neck pain and headache.
  - Chiropractic neck manipulation has proven specific physiological benefits. Studies have shown that cervical manipulation produces a consistent and significant increase in the active range of motion.
  - A report released in 2001 by researchers at the Duke University Evidence-Based Practice Center in Durham, N.C., found that spinal manipulation resulted in almost immediate improvement for those headaches that originate in the neck. Furthermore, spinal manipulation offered significantly fewer side effects and longer-lasting relief of than did commonly prescribed medications.
  - In a 2007 literature review, researchers reviewed nine previously published trials and found "high-quality evidence" that patients with chronic neck pain showed significant pain-level improvements following spinal manipulation. No trial group was reported to remain unchanged, and all groups showed positive results. No trial reported any serious adverse effects. *(Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics, March/April 2007)*

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### Secondary Media Messages

- Studies have shown that the best estimates of the odds of suffering a serious complication from a chiropractic neck treatment are the same odds a person faces of dying in a commercial airline crash.
  - Research has shown that the odds of suffering a serious complication from a chiropractic neck manipulation is less than 1 in 2 million, to 1 in 5.8 million cervical manipulations.
- Too often, opinion rather than fact has dominated discussions regarding stroke and chiropractic manipulation, even though there has been *no* definitive evidence that chiropractic adjustments cause strokes.
  - There is no established cause-and-effect relationship between chiropractic manipulation and cervical artery dissection.
  - There are many reports in the literature of cervical artery dissections occurring after everyday activities that most people would consider non-traumatic, such as turning your head when driving, having your hair washed at a beauty salon, or sleeping on your stomach.
  - It is possible that in many cases where a cervical artery dissection is correlated with chiropractic manipulation, the stroke may not have been caused by the chiropractic treatment itself. The patient may have been seeing the doctor of chiropractic for treatment of the symptoms that were actually caused by the evolving arterial dissection.
- When compared to the number of illnesses and deaths that will occur this year from the use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, the number of serious complications from chiropractic treatment is extremely low.
  - According to the Institute of Medicine, at least 1.5 million Americans are sickened, injured or killed each year by errors in prescribing, dispensing and taking medications.
  - Mistakes in giving drugs are so prevalent in hospitals that, on average, a patient will be subjected to a medication error each day he or she occupies a hospital bed. (*Institute of Medicine*)