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Risk of vertebrobasilar stroke and chiropractic care: results of a population-based case-control and case-crossover study.

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This study investigated associations between chiropractic visits and vertebrobasilar artery stroke and contrasted this with primary care physician visits and vertebrobasilar artery stroke.

Chiropractic care is popular for neck pain and headache, but in years past, concerns have been brought up by medical professionals that neck manipulations may increase the risk for stroke. Neck pain and headache are common symptoms of artery dissection, which commonly stroke. Clinical cases were evaluated over a nine year span from city-based area hospitals. Age and gender were examined in this study. The research revealed 818 vertebrobasilar strokes hospitalized in a population of more than 100 million people. There was no increased association between chiropractic visits and vertebrobasilar stroke in those older than 45 years. Positive associations were found between primary care physician visits and vertebrobasilar stroke in all age groups. Practitioner visits billed for headache and neck complaints were highly associated with subsequent vertebrobasilar stroke.

Stroke is a very rare event in the population. The increased risks of stroke associated with chiropractic and PCP visits is likely due to patients with headache and neck pain from vertebrobasilar tearing seeking care before their stroke. Researchers found no evidence of excess risk of stroke associated chiropractic care compared to primary care.

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Adverse events following chiropractic care for subjects with neck or low-back pain: do the benefits outweigh the risks?

Rubinstein SM.

This study provides an overview of the benign and serious risks associated with chiropractic care for subjects with neck or low-back pain. Most adverse events associated with spinal manipulation are benign and self-limiting. The incidence of severe complications following chiropractic care and manipulation is extremely low. The evidence in this article suggests that chiropractic care is a useful therapy for subjects with neck or low-back pain for which the risks of serious adverse events should be considered negligible.