

Is there any Scientific Evidence that a Chiropractic Adjustment can cause a stroke?

Hi Doctor,

I'm sure you saw the recent story about the Playboy model who passed away from a stroke, allegedly caused by a Chiropractic adjustment she had received 3 days prior to her death.

The reason for this controversy has largely been because the coroner ruled that a cervical artery dissection was the cause of death. And doctors and family have linked the artery dissection to the chiropractic adjustment.

First off, the coroner may likely have been correct about the dissected artery. But based on the literature, it was **NOT** caused by the adjustment.

The research makes it clear that an adjustment is not able to dissect the vertebral artery any more than turning the head could dissect it.

Here's a link to the meta-analysis study from this year (2016):

<http://www.cureus.com/articles/4155-systematic-review-and-meta-analysis-of-chiropractic-care-and-cervical-artery-dissection-no-evidence-for-causation>

Notice the main line in the study:

"There is no convincing evidence to support a causal link between chiropractic adjustment and cervical artery dissection (CAD)."

Other research published in the reputable Spine Journal in 2008 also proved no causal link. But there is reason to believe why the connection is being made by doctors, family, and the media. When symptoms of a cervical artery dissection (CAD) or even a possible CAD occur, neck pain and headaches are a common side effect. Because of this, many patients experiencing a CAD will seek chiropractic care for relief. Unfortunately, if they do have an episode (which is usually days later like it was in this case), they trace it back to the chiropractic adjustment.

In my opinion, we can't blame them. If I was in their shoes and had little knowledge, understanding, or research about chiropractic, I would possibly make that same connection. This is why it is critically important for us to know and understand the scientific evidence so we can reassure current and prospective chiropractic patients on the safety of our care based on sound scientific evidence and clinical outcomes.

Here is a link to another study explaining this phenomenon:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18204390>

Additionally, here are 2 other links to studies that also found no causal relationship with a chiropractic adjustment and stroke.

<http://chiromt.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12998-015-0063-x>

And this study actually showed that those who were under the care of a Chiropractor had fewer strokes than those under a primary care physician.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25494315>

So is there any scientific evidence that a Chiropractic Adjustment can cause a stroke?

No! I have not seen any sound scientific evidence that links a chiropractic adjustment to cervical artery dissection or stroke.

It's important that your patients understand this and know that you have plenty of research that reveals the safety of your care.

It pains me to think that a lay person is going to see the headlines of a situation like this and never get to experience the benefits of chiropractic because of fear.

Keep up the good work and reassure your current and prospective practice members that chiropractic is safe, effective, and one of the most important aspects of creating and keeping a healthy body, mind, and soul!

Here for You,
Dr. Dan Sullivan
www.chiropracticadvocate.com

