

Neck Manipulation Linked to Stroke Risk



The American Heart Association (AHA), in a new statement published in its journal *Stroke*, warns about the risk of stroke for patients receiving neck manipulation therapy. Although the group could not confirm whether neck manipulation causes stroke or not, they cite the need to inform patients of the potential risk before receiving such therapy.

Various experts have posited differing opinions on the merits and shortcomings of neck manipulation within therapy, further fuelling an ongoing debate on the issue.

Neck manipulation has been associated with a risk of cervical artery dissection (CD), a kind of arterial tear that is considered to be a major cause of stroke among young to middle-aged adults. When the arterial tear or CD gets dislodged into the bloodstream, experts explain, this can lead to a clot and cause an ischemic stroke by blocking one of the blood vessels in the brain.

Most dissections involve some trauma, stretch or mechanical stress, according to Dr. José Biller, lead author of the AHA statement. "Sudden movements that can hyperextend or rotate the neck - such as whiplash, certain sports movements, or even violent coughing or vomiting - can result in CD, even if they are deemed inconsequential by the patient."

Neck manipulation therapy utilises some techniques that enact the abovementioned sudden movements, by rotating or extending the neck.

Previous case control studies have shed some light on the connection between CD and neck manipulation therapy. As these studies were not designed to examine any cause and effect, it is not known if there are other factors involved that could explain the relationship.

"Although a cause-and-effect relationship between these therapies and CD has not been established and the risk is probably low, CD can result in serious neurological injury," Dr. Biller noted. It is important that patients are informed of such risk before undergoing neck manipulation, Dr. Biller added.

[Source: Medical News Today](#)

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