

# Does *Neck Manipulation* Cause Stroke?

Media outlets have highlighted a published estimate that 1 in 5.7 million chiropractic patients suffers a stroke in the days following treatment; and some individuals question if neck manipulation could be the cause.

## Research *Answers* the *Question*

Five major studies have answered this question after examining the relationship of stroke and neck manipulation.

1

DATA  
CONCLUSION

ALL PUBLISHED DATA

*"No excess risk of stroke for chiropractic manipulation compared to primary (MD) care." (1)*

2

DATA  
CONCLUSION

39 MILLION PATIENTS

*"No significant association between stroke and chiropractic visits. Manipulation is an unlikely cause of stroke." (2)*

3

DATA  
CONCLUSION

100 MILLION  
PERSON YEARS

*"No evidence of excess risk of stroke associated chiropractic care compared to primary care." (3)*

4

DATA  
CONCLUSION

15,523 CASES

*"No excess risk of stroke after chiropractic care." (4)*

5

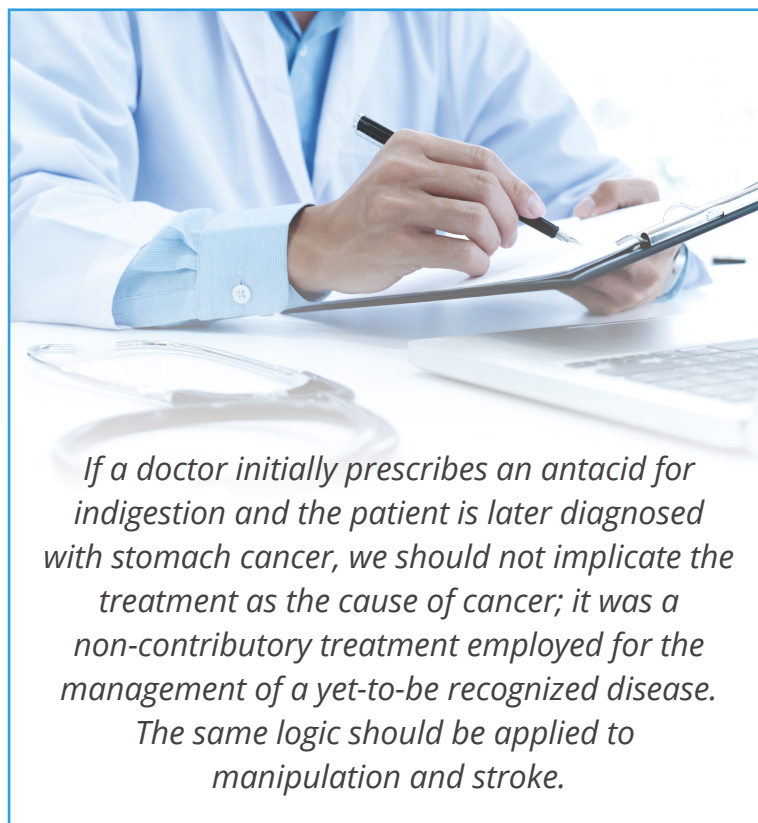
DATA  
CONC.

PATIENTS 65 AND OLDER

*"Among [patients] aged 65 and older who received cervical spinal manipulation, the risk of cervical artery dissection is no greater." (5)*

# Problems Trigger **Doctor Visits,** Not Vice Versa

Each study has concluded that chiropractic spinal manipulation does not cause stroke, however, patients with symptoms of an impending stroke have a higher likelihood to seek care from a variety of providers, including chiropractors. Chiropractic or medical treatment is not the cause of the stroke, but rather a non-contributory mid-point of a developing crisis.



*If a doctor initially prescribes an antacid for indigestion and the patient is later diagnosed with stomach cancer, we should not implicate the treatment as the cause of cancer; it was a non-contributory treatment employed for the management of a yet-to-be recognized disease. The same logic should be applied to manipulation and stroke.*

## 76% Lower

One recent study concluded: *"it is unlikely that chiropractic care is a significant cause of injury. In fact, risk of injury was 76% lower among subjects with a chiropractic office visit than those who saw a primary care physician."* (6)

## Chiropractic Care Has An **Exceptional** Safety Record

Chiropractic manipulation has an exceptional record of safety, but like all treatments, it is not without risk. Patients should discuss any concerns with their provider. Following careful assessment, you and your chiropractor can determine the best and safest mode of care.

### References

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3. Cassidy JD et al. Risk of vertebrobasilar stroke and chiropractic care: results of a population based case-control and case-crossover study. *Spine* 2008 Feb 15;33(4 Suppl):S176-83
4. Cassidy, J, David et al. Risk of Carotid Stroke after Chiropractic Care: A Population-Based Case-Crossover Study. *Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Diseases*, Volume 26, Issue 4, 842 – 850
5. Whedon JM, Petersen CL, Li Z, Schoelkopf WJ, Haldeman S, MacKenzie TA, Lurie JD. Association between cervical artery dissection and spinal manipulative therapy—a medicare claims analysis. *BMC Geriatrics.* 2022 Dec;22(1):1-9.
6. Whedon JM, et al. Risk of Traumatic Injury Associated With Chiropractic Spinal Manipulation in Medicare Beneficiaries Aged 66 to 99 Years. *Spine* 2015;40:264–270