

23 December 2016

Response to 'Chiropractic Crackdown' Segment

In reference to the "Chiropractic Crackdown" segment on the Channel Nine Today Extra program (Thursday 22 December) with Dr Zac Turner, the Chiropractors' Association of Australia is concerned about the nature of many of the opinions put forward by Dr Turner which we consider were inaccurate and/or misinformed.

Seeking assistance from any healthcare provider for the treatment of low back pain has risks. For example, a large number of studies report harm from drug treatments and surgery for low back pain. Spinal manipulation should not be singled out by Dr Turner as high risk when the most recent reviews of the research reports the evidence for the risk of harm is frequently low quality or inconclusive.^{1,2}

Chiropractic is a profession that is NOT represented by any single treatment approach. Dr Turner should not assume that chiropractors only offer spinal manipulation to manage back pain. He should further understand that chiropractors are highly qualified to make a correct diagnosis of the underlying cause of low-back pain and are trained to provide individualised care based upon an individual's findings. This includes rest or exercise, heat or ice, manipulation or mobilisation and when more urgent medical care is needed. Chiropractors aim to work with medical doctors in the appropriate circumstances when treating low back pain.

We note that the latest research reports paracetamol to be ineffective for the treatment of low back pain despite still being recommended in clinical practice guidelines.³ We further note that exercise as therapy for acute LBP also has shown minimal benefit and is likely only beneficial to help prevent future recurrence.⁴

Clinical practice guidelines report mixed recommendations for spinal manipulation alone as a treatment for low back pain.^{5,6} Spinal manipulation has been studied in a large number of trials, some of which report mixed findings for benefit. This is why chiropractors utilise a range of therapies, provide appropriate advice and will often carefully work with other healthcare providers in many circumstances.

While spinal manipulation alone may be less effective for acute low back pain⁷ the evidence is stronger for those with chronic low back pain where the "results demonstrate that spinal manipulation appears to be as effective as other common therapies such as, exercise therapy, standard medical care or physiotherapy".⁸

The Chiropractors' Association of Australia has some great resources including our [JUST START WALKING APP](#) and augmented reality [CAA BACK APP](#) to assist Australians with their health and wellbeing.

Finally, in future we believe Today Extra would be better served consulting health practitioners who have appropriate knowledge and skills in relation to the topic being discussed.

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¹ Church EW, Sieg EP, Zalatimo O, Hussain NS, Glantz M, Harbaugh RE: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Chiropractic Care and Cervical Artery Dissection: No Evidence for Causation. *Cureus*. 2016;8:(2): e498.

² Wynd S, Westaway M, Vohra S, Kawchuk G: The quality of reports on cervical arterial dissection following cervical spinal manipulation. *PLoS One*. 2013;8:e59170.

³ Williams, C.M., et al., Efficacy of paracetamol for acute low-back pain: a double-blind, randomised controlled trial. *The Lancet*, 2014. 384(9954): p. 1586–1596.

⁴ Choi, B.K., et al., Exercises for prevention of recurrences of low-back pain. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*, 2010(1): p.CD006555.

⁵ Koes, B.W., et al., An updated overview of clinical guidelines for the management of non-specific low back pain in primary care. *Eur. Spine J*, 2010. 19(12): p. 2075–2094.

⁶ Dagenais, S., Tricco, A.C. and Haldeman, S., Synthesis of recommendations for the assessment and management of low back pain from recent clinical practice guidelines. *Spine J*, 2010. 10(6): p. 514–529.

⁷ Rubinstein, S.M., et al., Spinal manipulative therapy for acute low-back pain. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*, 2012. 9: p. CD008880.

⁸ Rubinstein, S.M., et al., Spinal manipulative therapy for chronic low-back pain. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*, 2011(2): p. CD008112.

REPRESENTING OVER 2,300 HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CONTRIBUTING TO HEALTHIER AUSTRALIANS.

Chiropractic is an effective, low risk profession regulated by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)



4,885
Practicing chiropractors in Australia



5 years
University educated



801m
Total revenue contribution to Australia's economy



Up to **300,000**
patients visits to Australian chiropractors each week

- Chiropractors **must be registered** and complete mandatory annual professional development
- **Chiropractic education is scientifically rigorous and evidence based**
- AHPRA notifications for chiropractors is only **2.8% (GPs - 5% & dentists - 4.7%)**
- **Majority are small business owners** contributing to the economy and employment in local communities



CHIROPRACTORS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:

- Chiropractic is concerned with the **diagnosis, management and prevention of mechanical disorders of the musculoskeletal system**, and the effects of these disorders on the function of the nervous system and general health.
- Chiropractic is a **low risk profession** with an **enviable safety record**, a result of evidence based care that avoids invasive procedures and medications where possible and delivered by five year university educated healthcare professionals.
- The Chiropractic Board of Australia has a Code of Conduct for Chiropractors. It requires every registered practitioner to provide safe and effective health services within an ethical framework. **The CAA expects all members to meet the Board's Code of Conduct** and, in addition, adhere to further requirements to maintain a higher level of professional competence, conduct and ethics.

THE CHIROPRACTORS' ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN THE PEAK BODY REPRESENTING CHIROPRACTORS FOR OVER 25 YEARS.

The Chiropractors' Association of Australia:

- Supports a **fully robust** and **transparent regulative framework** for the profession.
- Expects all members to comply to our **industry leading Quality Care Statement;**
 - Addressing the care of infants and children, including supporting the importance of immunisation as a health care initiative.
 - Ensuring best practice conduct when visiting health facilities and credentialing
 - Requiring members to have the highest of standards when advertising their services.
- Is funding the **world's first longitudinal study** into chiropractic conducted by University of Technology, Sydney.
- Is funding PhDs conducting independent research in Australian universities.

CAA is working with all levels of Government, regulators and chiropractors to ensure the delivery of world leading health services to the Australian community.