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Safe treatment of people with neck pain, headache or orofacial symptoms

Although rare, serious adverse events (SAEs) following cervical spine manipulation and mobilization have been described in literature. The current explanation with regard to vascular SAEs is that patients presenting with neck pain and headache who develop a vascular SAE (in particular arterial dissection) during or after treatment, may have an underlying pathology or flow limitation which was not recognised and which was subsequently aggravated by treatment. As contemporary musculoskeletal physiotherapists are evolving into more rounded, expert health care professionals in more diverse settings, they should be aware of a potential vasculogenic contribution to the patient's complaints and assess and refer the patient accordingly.

To assess a potential vasculogenic contribution, up-to-date knowledge is important. However, evidence suggests that physiotherapists are not always sufficiently trained to conduct an evidence based clinical reasoning process (including patient history and physical examination). For example, in recent surveys it was found that physiotherapists have insufficient knowledge about risk factors regarding (vascular) SAEs and do not conduct a contemporary pre-treatment physical examination. Therefore, updating the knowledge and skills of physiotherapists is important.

This one-day course will focus on safe treatment of people presenting with neck pain, headache or orofacial symptoms. After following this course, physiotherapists will have up-to-date knowledge about minimizing the risks associated with the treatment of people with neck pain, headache or orofacial symptoms and about identifying underlying risk factors and a potential vasculogenic contribution to the patient's complaints. Participants will be able to conduct an evidence based clinical reasoning process, including a contemporary patient interview and physical examination, focused on identifying underlying (vascular) pathologies and risk factors. Moreover, attention will be given to patient communication, including providing appropriate information and advice.

Take aways:

After this course, you will have extensive knowledge about:

- Vascular pathologies and flow limitations of the cervical spine region
- Vascular anatomy and signs and symptoms of vascular pathologies and flow limitations
- Contraindications, red flags and risk factors
- Important components of the patient history, physical examination and patient communication

After this course, you will be able to:

- Conduct an evidence based clinical reasoning process
- Take a contemporary patient history
- Conduct a contemporary physical examination
- Provide appropriate information and advice