

Health Update: Whiplash

Major Study Questions the Use of Muscle Relaxants, Pain Medications, and NSAIDs in Whiplash

A scientific review published recently (Chochrane Database Syst Rev, July 2007) casts doubt on many common whiplash treatments. Despite billions spent on scientific research each year, it is surprising that many common treatments lack valid scientific evidence for safety and effectiveness. As studies accumulate in libraries, some groups take an interest in figuring out the data landscape and what it all means for doctors, and more importantly, the patients they serve.

Researchers from the Chochrane group did just that, and retrieved studies that took place over the past two decades. They specifically looked at medical treatments in whiplash and other mechanical neck disorders. It was all a bit of a disappointment because of surprisingly few studies, and when they were actually conducted, were of very limited quality-meaning it was hard to reach conclusions. An area of evidence that was especially weak, was studies of muscle relaxants (these relax muscles), analgesics (these block pain signals), and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs/NSAIDs (these reduce inflammation). The authors concluded that their benefits are not proven in solid scientific studies and that any potential benefits are "unclear."

Of course this report received little media attention, and we continue to see advertisements on TV and in print that tell patients to go for a pill to help their mechanical neck pain or whiplash. Rarely are viable options such as conservative chiropractic care discussed. Most patients who get whiplash injuries follow the medical approach of drugs and sometimes even surgery.

Perhaps you may want to consider a mechanical approach for a mechanical problem such as whiplash. Or maybe you've had some doubts about consuming many medications over several months or even years. When consumed over long periods of time, NSAIDs in particular can lead to stomach bleeding and other complications such as liver and kidney problems. Although an ad on television may state that, "simple blood tests are needed to check for liver problems," liver problems such as liver failure, are anything but simple.

And of course just simply blocking pain signals is unlikely to get at the cause of your pain, which is usually a sprain of the small joints of the spine.

We understand this and offer a more natural solution for assisting patients who have suffered a whiplash injury. Because many patients may be unsure about chiropractic care, or just want some questions answered about the services and techniques we offer, our consultations are always complementary. Please call (831) 475-8600 to schedule an appointment and discuss your health concerns.

If you have a health concern or want to know what are the best approaches for tackling this difficult problem and need to schedule an appointment for a consultation, call 475-8600.