Cervicogenic Headache

Cervicogenic headaches are caused by strain in the neck. The pain of this type of headache tends to be rather unilateral, originating from the neck and spreading to the sides and front of the head. Its initial manifestation is usually intermittent periods of pain, followed by a progression to continual pain.

Causes

The headache may be the result of neck movement in a particular position or direction, perhaps even the force from a sneeze, or it may be the result of some sort of pressure applied over certain parts of the back of the neck. The most general and prevalent cause is excessive strain to the neck and spine. This excessive strain may be the result of:

- Poor Posture
- Disc Issues
- Sleeping Problems
- Injuries (either current or prior)
- Fatigue

All these things can place a strain on the back and neck muscles, leading to a cervicogenic headache. The most common symptom is a steady, non-throbbing discomfort that is centered at the base and back of the skull. The pain can extend down to the neck and course downwards between the shoulder blades. The pain can also be centered in the forehead. Even though the true issue of the headache comes from the spine and neck, the pain is typically felt more in the head region.

Common Symptoms of a Cervicogenic Headache

Symptoms of a cervicogenic headache include:

- Pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Blurred Vision
- Sensitivity to Light
- Pain (coursing down either one or both of the arms)
- Neck Stiffness
- Difficulty Moving (Neck, Shoulders, Head)

Examination

The examination of a cervicogenic headache begins with a physical examination sometimes including standard radiographs, CT and MRI. Nerve blocks may also be used
in diagnosis. Once a diagnosis is confirmed, pharmaceutics may be used to control the pain. However, these drugs may not be as effective at getting to the true causes of the headache.

**Can a Chiropractor Help Relieve my Cervicogenic Headache?**

Certain chiropractic techniques, such as spinal manipulation, may be effective in mitigating the cause of cervicogenic headaches. Some health specialists take to performing a technique called the spinal manipulation technique for relieving lower back pain. The technique improves general mobility, including being able to walk better and move around more easily. During spinal manipulation, also known as spinal manipulative therapy, a dynamic chiropractic specialist applies controlled force to a joint of the spine. The goal is to relieve pain and improve mobility. Spinal manipulation is a versatile technique. There are over 100 such techniques, varying among professionals. However, with most of these variations, manipulations are performed to release pressure in the affected area, including at joints. The manipulations also serve to aligns muscles and joints, and improve blood circulation to those body parts, maintaining the health and mobility of those areas. Therefore, when spinal manipulation is utilized for cervicogenic headache pain, the treatment can be effective and even more permanent, than conventional methods that involve medications.

Resources:


