



CALIFORNIA CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION

CCA Memo Regarding Recent News Coverage On Accidental Death Of Celebrity Katie May

As you have likely seen in the news this week, there are reports revealing that the Los Angeles Coroner's Office cited injury from neck manipulation as a factor in the accidental death of celebrity Katie May, who passed away in February. CCA has been monitoring the news closely and we are available to provide comments, should media inquire more about the situation.

Should you or your office be contacted by the media, we encourage you to forward those inquiries to Cris Forsyth, CCA Director of Governmental Affairs and Communications and we will respond accordingly. Please do not comment as a representative of CCA.

Cris Forsyth can be reached at cforsyth@calchiro.org or 916.648.2720, ext 130.

When speaking to patients and your community, below is information you may find helpful. Our goal is share what we know at this time and to be a resource without adding to the media sensation. We extend our sympathy to the family of Katie May. We are saddened by the unexpected loss and offer our deepest condolences.

Unfortunately, the recent statement released by the Los Angeles County Coroner addressing the autopsy findings nine months after her passing has not provided the public with information to be able to evaluate the conclusions of the Coroner's Office in relation to Ms. May's death.

It has been reported Ms. May experienced a rather severe fall on a photo shoot that began the neck pain that developed into an arterial dissection that ultimately led to a cerebral blood clot.

Arterial dissection of the cervical (neck) arteries is a very rare condition occurring in 2-3 persons per 100,000 population per year. As this condition often produces neck pain and headache, many times persons will consult their health care providers for advice or treatment in response to the discomfort.

Research published earlier this year by a team of neurosurgeons at the University of Pennsylvania Hershey Medical Center exploring this question concluded, **"There is no convincing evidence to support a causal link between chiropractic manipulation and CAD." (Cervical Artery Dissection).**

With respect to the safety of neck manipulation, it's important to understand there are risks and benefits to all treatments; however, the best available evidence indicates there is no causal relationship between neck manipulation and stroke. Millions of neck manipulations are performed safely in the U.S. every year, providing patients relief from common forms of neck pain and headache, and helping them to get back to their normal activities.

Remind patients who have upper neck pain or headaches to be very specific about symptoms. This will help offer the safest and most effective treatment, even if it involves referral to another health care provider.

The chiropractic profession takes this issue very seriously and engages in training and postgraduate education courses to recognize the risk factors in patients, and to continue rendering treatment in the most effective and responsible manner.

As a result of media generated by the Katie May story, some patients may come into chiropractic offices concerned about having their necks adjusted. To help talk to patients, the American Chiropractic Association offers this [web page](#) with information on cervical arterial dissection (CAD) and neck manipulation. The page includes links to research studies demonstrating the safety of chiropractic, information on the benefits and risks of neck manipulation compared with other common treatments, fact sheets that can be distributed to patients and key messages to help doctors touch on important points during their discussions with patients.

We want to thank our partners at American Chiropractic Association and Foundation 4 Chiropractic Progress as we work together on behalf of our members and the chiropractic community. We are here to answer any questions you may have. Please contact Cris Forsyth at cforsyth@calchiro.org with any questions or comments.

Attention CCA Members! Look for an invite for a special webinar regarding this issue. Dr. Gerry Clum, DC spokesperson for Chiropractic Progress will be hosting an informative webinar discussing this topic and will be available to answer questions.
