



To News Editor
For Immediate Release

26 June 2008

Excessive or Prolonged Neck Rotation and Extension May Cause Ischaemic Stroke

Stroke is the leading cause of disability in adults. Carotid and vertebral arteries are the major vessels responsible for blood supply to the brain. In the neck, these vessels are susceptible to injury as they are not fully protected by skeletal structures. When the neck is over extended or rotated for a prolonged period of time, the mobile segments of the arteries can be compressed or torn (dissection). This will compromise blood flow into the brain and result in stroke.

In Hong Kong, stroke related to prolonged and excessive neck extension or rotation during sports and work are not rare. Researchers of the Department of Medicine and Therapeutics, and the S. H. Ho Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke Centre at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) have discovered that during the past 2 years, these cases are encountered about once every 3 months in the Prince of Wales Hospital. The average age of these patients is 47.8 years old. Most of them are male patients and they recovered well after receiving treatments.

Dissection is a tear in the inner lining of the artery. This tear allows blood to leak into the artery wall and hence, compromises blood flow into the brain. Dissections are most often preceded by trauma to the neck. Examples of causes leading to mild trauma include chiropractic manipulation or prolonged telephone conversation by securing the phone between one's ear and shoulder, while severe neck trauma may be resulted from sports and traffic accidents. For some patients, the cause of dissection is unknown and genetic component may be present.

Neck rotation or extension during usual daily activities seldom causes stroke. However, given that the vertebral artery is small with a diameter of about 2 mm only, it can sometimes be compressed by the base of the skull when the neck is over extended for a prolonged period of time, thus affecting blood flow into the brain in some severe cases.

Work and sports are part of everyone's life. The Faculty of Medicine at CUHK concludes that though uncommon, it is important for the public to realize that excessive neck rotation or extension for a prolonged period of time may occasionally cause ischaemic stroke. It is important to be aware of correct neck posture, not only to prevent spinal degeneration and muscle pain, but also to avoid injury to neck vessels. Should symptoms of stroke occur after sports or prolonged neck rotation or extension, one should seek medical advice immediately as early treatment may prevent the disease from progression.



致新聞編輯
請即發放

長時間過份傾側或伸展頸部可能引致缺血性中風

中風是引致成人殘障的其中一個主要成因。頸動脈及脊椎動脈是輸送血液至腦部的重要血管，但由於部份頸部血管沒有骨骼保護，因此較容易受創傷。長時間過份傾側或伸展頸部，可令血管受壓或撕裂，血液因而不能供應至腦部，引致中風。

在本港的中風個案中，因運動或工作需要而長時間重覆傾側或伸展頸部以致中風的例子實在屢見不鮮。香港中文大學（中大）醫學院內科及藥物治療學系，以及何善衡心腦血管病中心的研究人員發現，過去兩年在沙田威爾斯親王醫院的中風個案中，平均每三個月就有一宗上述個案。病人以男性為主，平均年齡為 47.8 歲，痊癒情況理想。

頸動脈撕裂是指頸動脈內膜撕開，導致血液漏到血管壁，有礙血液輸送至腦部。大部份頸動脈撕裂的個案是由於頸部創傷所致，輕微創傷的例子包括進行脊椎按摩療法或長期把電話筒夾在肩膊與耳朵之間；嚴重的則包括因運動或交通意外所引致的頸部創傷。除頸部受創之外，部份頸動脈撕裂與基因相關，唯有些則成因不明。

日常的頸部轉動或伸展動作，在一般情況下甚少引致中風。但由於脊椎動脈的直徑只有約兩毫米，如長時間過度伸展頸部，脊椎動脈可能會被頭骨底部壓着，嚴重者會影響血液流通至腦部。

中大醫學院總結，工作及運動是日常生活的一部份，雖然一般的頭頸動作不會引致中風，然而大眾須知道過份傾側或伸展頸部的潛在危險，甚至引致缺血性中風。因此，保持頸部的正確姿勢尤其重要，除了可防止脊髓退化及肌肉痛楚，亦可預防血管受損。如在運動或長期側頸後出現中風的徵狀，必需及早求醫，進行診治，防止病情惡化。

2008 年 6 月 26 日