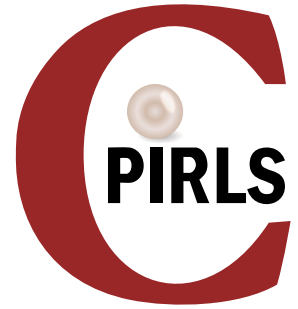


Safer Practice Notice



Monitoring and analysing chiropractic patient safety incident reports enables the CPiRLS Team to provide advice that can assist in ensuring improved standards of chiropractic patient safety. This Safer Practice Notice is a fast-track advice notice for all chiropractors.

Reducing the risk of falls from a chiropractic treatment table

Update issued: June 2022



Risk:

Falls can occur when patients are asked to alter their position, or transfer to or from the treatment table. Falls have the potential to cause significant injury, particularly in elderly patients¹.

Evidence:

A review of the CPiRLS database (2009-2019) identified a theme of trips or falls, with the majority of incidents involving the treatment table. Approximately half of the reported incidents involved patients over the age of 65. All reported incidents (excluding near misses and potential falls) were reported as avoidable. Common reasons included a lack of supervision, and inadequate communication with the patient.

Recommended actions:

- Warn the patient of the potential hazard as they transfer or move position on the treatment table, and advise them to move slowly.
- Always supervise the patient as they transfer or move position. Stand on the side of the table from where a fall would be most likely to occur; this would usually be the side towards which the patient is moving. Endeavour to maintain continuous contact with the patient while moving on the table, as appropriate.
- Prior to a patient transferring to or from the treatment table or moving position, ensure the table is adjusted to its lowest height setting.
- Ensure the patient is safely positioned on the table when turning away from them.
- Take particular care with patient populations at increased general risk of falling i.e. the elderly¹.
- Ensure the treatment table is serviced regularly and in good working order².

References:

1. Peel NM (2011). Epidemiology of falls in older age. *Canadian Journal on Aging* 30(1):7-19
2. General Chiropractic Council (2016, amended 2019) The Code: Standard of conduct, performance and ethics for chiropractors. <https://www.gcc-uk.org/i-am-a-chiropractor/guidance/the-code> (Accessed 30 May 2022)

Further information:

To read reported cases, and for further information about chiropractic patient safety incident reporting, visit <https://www.cpirls.org>.