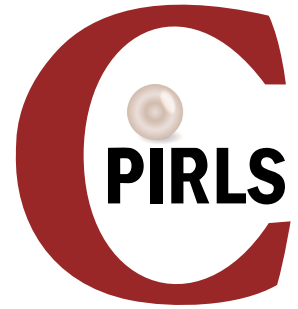


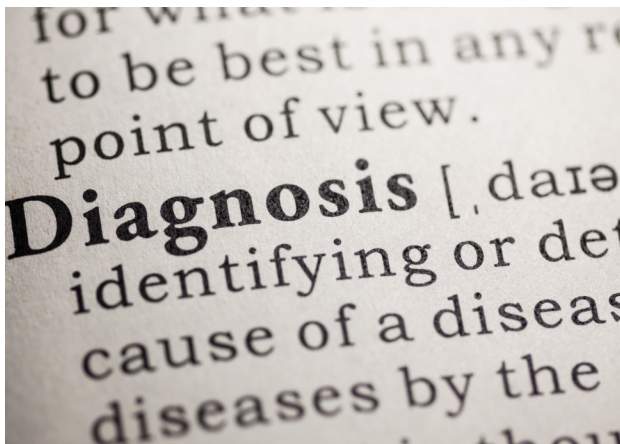
Safer Practice Notice



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 missing a serious underlying pathology

Notice issued: June 2022



Risk:

Missing a serious underlying pathology, which can have serious and permanent consequences for a patient.

Evidence:

A review of the CPiRLS database (2009-2019) identified a theme of serious underlying pathology being missed, or potentially missed. The most common contributing factor was reported as absent, delayed or inappropriate referral to another healthcare professional or directly for imaging. Other reported factors included inadequate history-taking or examination, as well as positive response to care masking an underlying pathology.

Recommended actions:

- Communicate effectively with patients, recognising barriers to communication. Encourage them to share relevant information with you and ensure they understand the importance of doing so.
- Use effective methods to screen patients for masqueraders of musculoskeletal pain, including vascular pathologies of the neck, utilising purposeful case history taking and examination¹. Be aware of conditions where misdiagnosis poses risk to patients, taking extra precautions to seek and confirm diagnosis.
- Consider that apparent positive responses to treatment could occur either due to contextual effects of care or where there is comorbidity of an MSK condition alongside serious underlying pathology.
- Refer patients for further investigations or management in a timely manner and by an appropriate mechanism, according to the urgency of the case².
- Ensure that all relevant clinical information is clearly documented and is provided (with the patient's consent) when making referrals to another chiropractor or healthcare professional³.

References:

1. Rushton A et al (2020). International Framework for Examination of the Cervical Region for potential of vascular pathologies of the neck prior to Orthopaedic Manual Therapy (OMT) Intervention: International IFOMPT Cervical Framework. <https://www.ifompt.org/site/ifompt/IFOMPT%20Cervical%20Framework%20final%20September%202020.pdf> (Accessed 30 May 2022).
2. Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance (2020). Urgent and Emergency Musculoskeletal Conditions Requiring Onward Referral (Version 2) <http://arma.uk.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Urgent-emergency-MSK-conditions-requiring-onward-referral-2.pdf> (Accessed 30 May 2022)
3. 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)

Recommended reading:

Rodziewicz TL et al (2021). Medical error reduction and prevention. StatPearls [Internet]. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK499956/> (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>.