

**General  
Chiropractic  
Council**



Protecting patients  
Setting standards  
Promoting the profession

FOR PUBLICATION

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The Guardian  
119 Farringdon Road  
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25 July 2008

Dear Editor

***“A bad week for alternative medicine” Rose Shapiro Guardian G2 24 July 08***

The GCC is the UK independent regulator for chiropractic. We have a statutory duty to protect the public by setting standards of chiropractic education, training, conduct and practice.

Ms Shapiro made several ill-founded and immoderate statements about the UK chiropractic profession, and by implication the GCC, which should be addressed.

The GCC strives to provide accurate information because it is in the public interest to do so; to do otherwise would benefit no-one. The GCC does not ‘downplay’ any risk that may be associated with chiropractic. All human activity carries some risk – it is the communication to the public of the rarity and context of an event, in terms of risk, that is the challenge.

There is no evidence that manipulation of the neck (by any health professional) causes stroke. A recent extensive and well conducted multi-centre research study in Canada demonstrated that, whether a patient sees a GP or a chiropractor, the risk of stroke for a patient susceptible to stroke is identical – very rare. We can extrapolate from this that some people suffering the symptoms of the onset of a stroke consult primary healthcare practitioners – not that the health practitioners cause the stroke.

It is also very unhelpful when the poor conduct of one practitioner, quoted by Ms Shapiro, is presented as the norm for an entire UK health profession. UK chiropractors must examine, diagnose and provide care, as necessary, for each individual patient and not continue beyond the point of benefit to that patient. They

must not make exaggerated claims or mislead patients about the benefits of chiropractic.

Chiropractors are health practitioners who specialise in managing musculoskeletal disorders and so many are trained, and are competent, to take and interpret x-rays. Chiropractors must abide by national regulations on the use of ionising radiation – which means that x-rays must not be taken without clinical justification.

It is a shame that Ms Shapiro takes a blunderbuss approach in the presentation of her thesis about those who take advantage of patients and the public – in doing so she undermines her argument with extreme scenarios and generalities, denigrating committed health professionals who do not deserve it.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Dixon', written in a cursive style.

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