

Cervical Spondylosis (CS)

Cervical Spondylosis (CS) may be caused by one or more of several complaints. A very common mistake is to perceive the cause of illness as a singular factor. Treating the patient for a single factor like a spur or a slipped disc in the neck does not always completely alleviate the patient's suffering.

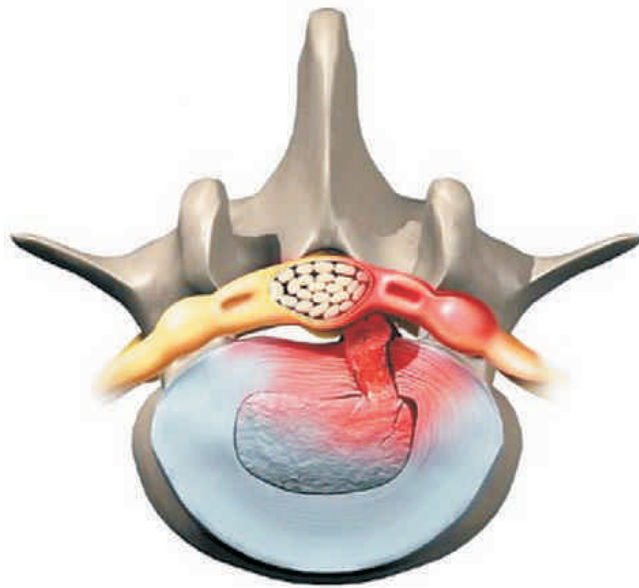
CS is more frequently seen in women than men. A thorough knowledge of the structure and functioning of the neck has become essential to understand and successfully treat CS. CS can come from a number of disorders and diseases of any structures in the neck: an injury, muscular problem or trapped nerve between vertebrae. Inappropriate working or sleeping posture may also cause CS.

Mobility of the spine is dependent on several small joints, the derangement of the functioning of one of which can cause neck pain and reduced movements. It has also been possible to study the effects on the spine of external influences like concussion, hypertension, hyperflexion, etc. Routine activity like travelling, household work and office jobs, though in themselves quite innocuous, are potential triggers which can seriously damage the neck and result in prolonged CS. Knowledge of such aggravating factors would prove beneficial and ensure a successful therapy.

With the increase in number of professionals who sit for hours doing desk work or for hours in front of the computer and at call centre jobs, which requires continuous sitting in one posture, the number of people suffering with CS is on the rise. CS is a 'wear and tear' of the vertebrae and discs in the neck.

What is cervical spondylosis?

To an extent, we all develop a degree of degeneration in the vertebrae and discs as we become older. However, cervical spondylosis is a term used if the degree of degeneration is accelerated, and causes more symptoms than is expected for a given age.



As the discs degenerate, over many years they become thinner. Sometimes the adjacent vertebrae develop small, rough areas of bone on their edges. Then nearby muscles, ligaments, and nerves may become irritated by these degenerative changes which can cause troublesome symptoms.

What is a herniated inter-vertebral disc?

The inter-vertebral discs are made-up of two concentric layers, the inner gel called annulus pulposus and the outer fibrous annulus fibrosus. As a result of advancing age, the nucleus loses fluid, volume and resiliency and the entire disc structure becomes more susceptible to trauma and compression. The disc becomes vulnerable to tears and as this occurs, the inner annulus pulposus protrudes through the fibrous layer, producing a bulge in the inter-vertebral disc. This condition is called a herniated disc. This compresses the

spinal cord or the emerging nerve roots and leads to associated problems.

What are the main symptoms of cervical spondylosis?

Symptoms can vary from mild to severe. You may have a flare up of symptoms if you over-use your neck, or if you sprain a neck muscle or ligament. Symptoms include:

- Pain in the neck. This may spread to the base of the skull and shoulders. Movement of the neck may make the pain worse. The pain sometimes spreads down an arm to a hand or fingers. The pain tends to wax and wane with flare-ups from time to time. However, some people develop chronic (persistent) pain.

- Some neck stiffness, particularly after a night's rest.

-Headaches from time to time. The headaches often start at the back of the head just above the neck and travel over the top to the forehead.

-Numbness, pins and needles or weakness may occur in part of the arm or hand. Tell a doctor if these symptoms occur as they may indicate a problem with a 'trapped nerve'. The Western diagnosis is usually through physical examination and imaging:

-Physical exam - the doctor may identify tender spots along the neck and evaluate your ability to move the neck in various directions. The function of the nerves and muscles in the arms and legs may be tested.

-Imaging - X-rays and MRI scans may be used to show bone spur and other abnormalities and reveal the extent of damage to the cervical spine.

The causes

1. Ligaments - The vertebrae are held together by ligaments to form one spine. Ligaments also form a capsule around the joints. The ligaments help to maintain a harmonious movement of the spine. During an accident if the ligaments is torn the movement will become abnormal and will cause pain in the neck. Unfortunately, ligaments are not seen on X-ray. One has to keep an open mind if one has to appreciate the problems of this kind. Ligaments make an important contribution to the dynamics of the spine and this in the causation of pain in the neck. Once a ligament is torn there is abnormal movement which in turn precipitates the degeneration in the disc resulting in added pain in the neck. The abnormal movement in the cervical spine is accentuated once correctly conceived it can be treated in good time to give relief from pain to the patient. With abnormal movement, the blood vessels supplying blood to the spinal cord can get kinked. For want of blood supply the cells of the spinal cord die and their function cannot be retrieved by doing successful operation to prevent abnormal movement. This is why once paralysis sets in, one of the contributing factors is lack of blood supply and recovery

becomes unpredictable. The neurological deficit or paralysis in cervical spondylosis has more than one factor contributing to it and the results cannot always be gratifying.

2. Spur or Osteophyte - When the disc degenerates, the edges of vertebral bodies start rubbing against each other. This movement is rough and gritty as against the normal movement. This movement is abnormal and if the bodies develop bony spikes they are a source of pain in the neck and they can be seen on X-ray. If one of these pointed spurs soles into the nerve root, it causes severe pain in the arm. Others can cause compression of the cord and produce paralysis in the legs.

3. Abnormal Movement - If an X-ray of the spine is done at the age of 40 years, 30% of them show degenerative changes and at the age of 50, almost 50% would show evidence of CS. Not all have complained of the pain in the neck and one has to be judicious in correlating the X-ray findings with symptoms of the patient. Abnormal movements of a degenerated spine are not smooth. There is no flexibility as elasticity in the ligaments and the intervertebral disc is lost. Even a relatively minor blow can produce severe pain the neck. Orthodox Treatment for cervical spondylosis. Exercise your neck and keep active. Aim to keep your neck moving as normally as possible. As far as possible, continue with normal activities. In the past, some people have worn a neck collar for long periods when a flare-up of neck pain developed. It is now known that if you wear a collar for long periods it may cause the neck to 'stiffen up'. So, attempt to keep it as active as possible.

.Professionals who spend hours doing desk work or in front off the computers should take small breaks in between and try and do simple neck exercises. Some of those neck pains and stiffness which does not improve in spite of exercise and medication are most certainly due to stress. When a person is in constant stress the muscles in the

neck goes into spasm and causes pain and stiffness in the neck so it is very important for the doctor or therapist to identify the cause and treat it accordingly.

.Medication or other non-narcotic pain relievers to relieve pain and reduce swelling.

.Physical therapy - Heat and cervical traction or active exercise program to relieve pain symptoms.

KORE Therapy Treatment with Traditional Chinese Medicine

Signs and Symptoms give the KORE Therapist a distinct syndrome of imbalance between either an internal organ issue, blood and body fluid issue, or a combination of both imposing on the structure. From this a plan of treatment evolves, which normally involves muscle testing to diagnose spinal mechanics and local muscle weakness and imbalance, energy medicine, cranial balancing and acupuncture/ herbal medicine. This treatment protocol addresses the causes listed above. The timescale is dependent on the degree of attrition, and may take some time to resolve. Our successes with this condition reflect the confidence in our system. We do not state here that we cure, but many of the symptoms are addressed. And people acknowledge this and go on to lead an active life without the aggravation of limited movement and pain.

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