Unraveling the Mystery of Cervical Pain #5: Clinical Applications 1

Instructor: Ben Benjamin, Ph.D.
Webinar Goal

To stretch and challenge your ability to think critically and further develop your assessment skills.
Logistics

• Time: 1 hour

• Schedule:
  • Present a scenario
  • You will respond to questions I pose

General Questions

Pretest

1. Generalized weakness in the neck tells you a disc injury is present. True or False?
2. The lower cervical ligaments often cause headaches. True or False?
3. Referred pain down the arm and into the hand tells you that the pain could be from a neck or shoulder injury. True or False?
4. Pain felt across upper back in-between the scapula bones usually indicates injury to what structure?
5. Asymmetrical limitation of movement usually indicates what?
6. Extreme weakness on testing all of the neck muscles often indicates a serious medical condition. True or False?
Cervical Webinar Clinical Application Case #1

- Try not go for the answer right away.
- Let's use our reasoning powers to go through the steps to figure these cases out.

Clinical Scenario #1

- I have felt severe pain in my neck and in my teeth for about two years now. I'm a teacher and when I prepare my lectures and have to write a lot, my teeth kill me.
- When I present a paper at a meeting and I am standing at a podium, it's really painful in my neck and my teeth after about 20 minutes.
- The worst is when I am typing at my computer for hours at a time. I can't do that anymore. Also when I drive my car it's hard for me to look around to the back to park the car.

I have been to three doctors and they all think I'm crazy. I'm not crazy. I just get these weird pains in my neck and my teeth. Do you think you could help me?
Clinical Scenario #1

- Passive rotation to the right is very limited and painful on the right side of the neck
- Passive rotation to the left is limited and painful on the right side of the neck
- Passive flexion is painful in the teeth and jaw area both on the right and on the left
- Passive extension is painful at the back of the neck
- All other tests are negative but his arms and hands are generally weak all over
- Palpation of all the central lower cervical ligaments, both posterior and slightly lateral, causes a good deal of pain
Clinical Scenario #1

- Passive rotation to the left is limited and painful on the right side of the neck

Clinical Scenario #1

- Passive flexion is painful in the teeth and jaw area both on the right and on the left
Clinical Scenario #1

- Passive extension is painful at the back of the neck

Clinical Scenario #1

- All other tests are negative but his arms and hands are generally weak all over
- Palpation of all the central lower cervical ligaments, both posterior and slightly lateral, causes a good deal of pain
Clinical Scenario #1

- Passive rotation to the right is very limited and painful on the right side of the neck
- Passive rotation to the left is limited and painful on the right side of the neck
- Passive flexion is painful in the teeth and jaw area
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- All other tests are negative but his arms and hands are generally weak all over
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Questions:

1. Do you think this client has a disc problem?
2. What does the weakness tell you?
3. What does passive flexion causing pain in the teeth and jaw tell you?
4. Why is the pain worse sitting at the computer than the other complaints he has?
5. Which test tells you why he has trouble parking his car?
Clinical Scenario #1

Questions:

What is the injury or injuries?

Questions?
Cervical Webinar Clinical Application Case #2

• I'm 58 years old and I love to walk, but when I walk I get a headache and if I walk a long time the back of my neck and between my shoulder blades begin to hurt on both sides.

• If I don't walk I don't have any pain but I have to do a lot of walking at my job. I'm a salesperson and when I'm on the phone it hurts in my upper back.

• When I have to type up my reports that I draft by hand first, it really hurts a lot. Sometimes it's a little different and it will start to hurt 3 or 4 hours after I stop working and sometimes it only hurts when I work.

• Emotionally I'm going through kind of a hard time. I'm ending my marriage of 30 years and I'm moving into a new apartment. When I try to talk to my wife I get a headache.

Clinical Scenario #2

• Passive rotation to the right is painful in the neck and right upper back
• Passive rotation to the left is painful in the neck and left upper back
• Passive flexion is painful in the neck and entire upper back
• Passive extension is painful in the neck
• There is severe tenderness and pain on palpation of the occipital muscles
• Palpation of the upper supraspinous and transverse ligaments shows extreme tenderness
• The person tightens up especially when you apply pressure to all the upper intertransverse ligaments on both right and left sides.
• There is also intense pain and at the lowest transverse process on both sides.
Clinical Scenario #2

• Passive rotation to the right is painful in the neck and right upper back

Clinical Scenario #2

• Passive rotation to the left is painful in the neck and left upper back
Clinical Scenario #2

- Passive flexion is painful in the neck and entire upper back

Clinical Scenario #2

- Passive extension is painful in the neck
Clinical Scenario #2

• There is severe tenderness and pain on palpation of the occipital muscles and the client flinches.

Clinical Scenario #2

• Palpation of the upper supraspinous and transverse ligaments shows extreme tenderness.
Clinical Scenario #2

- The person tightens up especially when you apply pressure to all the upper intertransverse ligaments on both right and left sides.

Clinical Scenario #2

- There is also intense pain at the lowest transverse process on both sides.
Clinical Scenario #2

- Passive rotation to the right is painful in the neck and right upper back
- Passive rotation to the left is painful in the neck and left upper back
- Passive flexion is painful in the neck and entire upper back
- Passive extension is painful in the neck

Clinical Scenario #2

- There is severe tenderness and pain on palpation of the occipital muscles and the client flinches
- Palpation of the upper supraspinous and transverse ligaments shows extreme tenderness
- The person tightens up especially when you apply pressure to all the upper intertransverse ligaments on both right and left sides.
- There is also intense pain and at the lowest transverse process on both sides.
Clinical Scenario #2

Questions:

1. What is causing the pain in the upper back?
2. What is causing the headache pain?
3. Where do you see the emotional factor?
4. What do I mean by the lowest transverse process causes intense pain?
5. Why does the person especially tighten up when pressure is applied to all the upper intertransverse ligaments?
6. Why does it hurt sometimes just after work and not during work?

Clinical Scenario #2

Questions:

What is injured?
Questions

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Post-test

1. Generalized weakness in the neck tells you a disc injury is present. True or False?
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