
ECU STATEMENT

IN RELATION TO THE NETHERLANDS CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION AND UPPER CERVICAL MANIPULATION

The Netherlands Chiropractic Association (NCA) is the ECU member for the Netherlands. There are two other national associations in the Netherlands, these being the Dutch Chiropractic Federation (DCF) and the Christian Chiropractic Association (CCA). Neither the DCF nor the CCA are recognised by the ECU.

Earlier this year, in the Netherlands, concerns were raised regarding upper cervical spine manipulation. At the time, this involved manual therapists in the Netherlands. On 4 September 2013, the Health Care Inspectorate (IGZ) posted an apparent prohibition notice on the practice of upper cervical spine manipulation. This post was subsequently removed on the advice of IGZ lawyers.

The issue provoked widespread national and international condemnation and members of the DCF, which claims to represent the interests of International Chiropractors Association (ICA) members working in the Netherlands, led calls to take legal steps to oppose the IGZ's proposed ban. It also encouraged its members to flood the office of the Health Care Inspectorate with letters of protest demanding a reversal of the decision. This action was undertaken unilaterally and without the support of the NCA.

On 27 September 2013, representatives of the NCA, led by its President, Vivian Kil, met with a panel of inquiry from the IGZ. They presented evidence to support the safety and effectiveness of upper cervical manipulation and answered fully all questions put to them by the panel.

The NCA found the IGZ to be fair and objective in its investigation. Research evidence was provided and the NCA supplied evidence of safety protocols to

support its claims that upper cervical spine manipulation was an extremely low risk clinical intervention.

On 8 October 2013, the IGZ published its findings, based primarily on information gained from its meeting with the NCA. In correspondence, the IGZ praised the openness, trustworthiness and professionalism with which the NCA had conducted itself. Reference was made to the scientific evidence provided, which served to assure the IGZ of the safety and value of upper cervical spine manipulation.

The IGZ did, however, pass comment in relation to letters that it had received from various national and international organisations and individuals, and strongly suggested that these letters had been unhelpful to the process.

The ECU congratulates the NCA on the professionalism of its approach and the excellent result that has been achieved through a focus on evidence-based practice and constructive dialogue. It is clear from the comments received from the Health Care Inspectorate that the actions of the NCA representatives were pivotal in securing a positive outcome.

However, the ECU is concerned that actions from overseas organisations over this issue ran contrary to the 1999 WFC Policy Statement on Non-Interference and Respect for National Authority. With the DCF having confirmed that it turned to its parent organisation in the United States, the ICA, the correct approach would have been for the ICA to respect WFC Policy and refrain from interference in what was a highly sensitive matter. Instead, it appears that the ICA, and organisations affiliated with it, advocated a policy of bombarding the IGZ with uninformed correspondence that may have derailed the NCA's professional, evidence-based and ultimately successful strategy.

The ECU regrets the actions of the ICA in this matter and hopes that in future, the sovereignty of ECU and WFC national association members will be duly respected.

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

Signed on behalf of the ECU Executive Council
London
October 2013