

# Outrage at Claim that Chiropractor Broke Baby's Neck

## 16 October, 2013 - Chiropractor cleared over 'break'

*The Australian, by Andrew Fraser*

A CHIROPRACTOR has been cleared over claims a baby's neck was broken during a treatment.  
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## 16 October, 2013 - CAA Media Release

### Chiropractor Cleared: Allegation of Neck 'Break' Wrong

*AHPRA Expert Report Says Baby's Neck Not Broken To Begin With*

As reported in the Australian today, an earlier story by Sunday papers that a Chiropractor broke the neck of a baby was wrong.

National President of the CAA, Dr Laurie Tassell (Chiropractor) said, "The Chiropractor could not and did not cause an injury to the child."

The Australian has uncovered the expert report commissioned by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the report shows the baby did not have a broken neck in the first place.

The baby had a condition known as congenital spondylolysis, a malformation of the spine and it can run in families.

The father of the baby had a similar congenital condition.

The congenital condition is rare but it can be confused with "hangman's fracture."

The AHPRA commissioned independent expert found in any event: the Chiropractor did not apply sufficient force to cause a fracture.

"The CAA is outraged that the AMA and its camp followers have launched a campaign to stop Chiropractors treating children based on an alleged injury that never happened," Dr Laurie Tassell said.

"It is shameful that the entire Chiropractic profession has been smeared and attacked, over something that did not occur."

"AMA President Dr Steve Hambleton should apologise for his public comments on this matter."

"Queensland MP Dr Alex Douglas should admit that his attack on the Chiropractic profession was also based on ignorance of the facts" said Dr Tassell.

Further queries or to interview Dr Tassell contact Bevan Lisle, Communications Director, CAA on 0468 920 851 or email [communications@caa.asn.au](mailto:communications@caa.asn.au)

***Monday 30 September, 2013***  
***Taken from Medical Observer***

ANGRY chiropractors are demanding a retraction of claims that a baby's upper cervical vertebra was fractured during an adjustment.

The Chiropractors' Association of Australia (CAA) said it was "outraged" at Fairfax newspaper reports of an investigation into the case of a four-month-old Melbourne baby.

The complaint was made to AHPRA by Dr Chris Pappas, a paediatrician at the Cabrini Medical Centre, who reportedly treated the baby following a chiropractic treatment for torticollis.

"Another few millimetres and there would have been a devastating spinal cord injury and the baby would have either died or had severe neurological impairment with quadriplegia," he was reported as saying.

Dr Pappas received a response from AHPRA earlier this month indicating that the case, which was referred on to the Chiropractic Board of Australia, had been closed after the chiropractor committed to completing further education, Fairfax reported.

Dr Pappas described the decision as an endorsement of "inappropriate" chiropractic treatment for infants without supporting scientific evidence.

The CAA, however, wants AHPRA to release full details of the investigation.

CAA president Dr Laurie Tassell (Chiro) said there was no doubt the baby had a hangman's fracture.

"The official report made it quite clear that the chiropractor did not cause the injury but unless AHPRA releases the report we can't use those findings," he told Medical Observer, adding that no adverse events involving a qualified chiropractor treating a child had been recorded in medical literature since 1992.

"The CAA is outraged that rather than clearing the chiropractor's name, as appropriate, the newspapers have smeared the chiropractor and the profession with such an allegation," a CAA statement read.

"Chiropractic care can be remarkably gentle. Being a five-year, university-trained spinal health expert, a chiropractor will modify their adjustment techniques to suit the age and spine of each individual child," Dr Tassell added.

The Fairfax article also alleged there was evidence that chiropractors had been treating patients without the necessary permission at Sydney hospitals.

"We will certainly find out what truth there is in that and if anyone has acted outside the rules or code of conduct then they deserve what they get," Dr Tassell said.

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