

## **GMA - Was her neck surgery necessary?**

August 2011 is marked with an interesting social phenomena in the Philippines. Everyone is talking about former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's neck surgery. The question often asked me by both patients and people in the community, as a chiropractor knowledgeable on these matters is: "Was her neck surgery necessary?"

Although many people are wondering if there may be some political reason for GMA to undergo this procedure at this particular time I will leave that up to the political pundits. Scientifically, allow me answer the question in order to give our patients some assurances that they will not likely be facing the same fate and to empower you to help explain these things to friends and family.



1. Common medical explanations of Cervical Spondylosis is that it is a common degenerative condition of the cervical spine believed to be caused by age-related changes in the inter-vertebral disks. As disk degeneration occurs, mechanical stresses result in osteophytic bars or spurs which form along the front of the spinal canal and sides of the vertebra that eventually irritates nerves that then radiates pain and/or numbness into the arm.
2. Chiropractic views Cervical Spondylosis as an entirely preventable condition and that the best outcomes to prevent any advancements of this condition is proper evaluation by a Doctor of Chiropractic, followed by the appropriate care and management of the neck condition at the time the patient is checked; of course depending if the neck problem is minor, moderate or severe.
3. Why Cervical Spondylosis forms in the spine should be the first question. Bones in the spine are designed to permit a certain range of motion at each of the 24 movable segments. When one or more segments experience a sprain, a ligament stretching or tearing, the healing is often incomplete and the remaining instability results in a minor misalignment of the bones / vertebra at that level. In time the misalignment causes friction, abnormal wear and tear, local inflammation; arthritis starts to set in and there is a measurable loss of range of motion of the head and neck.
4. Unresolved spinal misalignments (chiropractors call them vertebral subluxations) eventually become chronic and progress into Cervical Spondylosis with or without degenerative disc disease. Radiating nerve problems are commonly associated with this condition resulting in symptoms such as: neck stiffness, neck pain, headaches, arm pain and/or numbness, carpal tunnel syndrome, etc.
5. Chiropractors find and fix these neck problems every day. Those who waited too long to undergo chiropractic care can still be helped but much of the current damage to the discs cannot be reversed. What we do find is that the chiropractic care and management of cervical subluxations, by restoring normal range of motion to the neck, virtually stops any further degeneration; thereby preventing the need for future surgery.

The most important message to share with our patients is that nobody has to suffer Cervical Spondylosis if it is caught early, before it ever starts. People may have been asking you, since you go to docMIKE, if chiropractic can help them too, like it has helped you. Do take a moment to discuss with your loved ones how and when to be seen by docMIKE. You can also read the following brief article on "How to refer others for Chiropractic care" - [www.chiropractic.com.ph/pdf/how\\_to\\_refer.pdf](http://www.chiropractic.com.ph/pdf/how_to_refer.pdf)