

## Chiros banned from performing spinal manipulation on kids under two

The chiropractic board's interim policy is 'designed to protect the public' until the results of an inquiry are released

<https://www.australiandoctor.com.au/news/doctor-charged-rape-allowed-keep-practising>



**Paul Smith**  
**15th March 2019**  
6 Comments



Chiropractors across Australia have been effectively banned from performing spinal manipulation on children under two pending the results of a new review into the controversial practice.

The move by the Chiropractic Board of Australia follows the emergence of a Facebook video of a Melbourne practitioner holding up a newborn by its ankles before using a device known as an Activator to allegedly manipulate the spine.

The video was widely condemned — prompting Victorian Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos to commission an independent inquiry into the efficacy and safety of the technique on children.

The chiropractic board said it was awaiting the inquiry's findings “with keen interest”.

But under an interim policy introduced on Thursday, it advised chiropractors to “not use spinal manipulation to treat children under two years of age”.

It said the measure was designed to “protect the public until the outcomes of the expert review are known, and a final policy is developed on the issue”.

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Read more:

- [\*Aus Doc protracted attempt to find out what exactly chiropractic paediatric spinal manipulation is used to treat\*](#)

In the statement, the board defined spinal manipulation as “moving the joints of the spine beyond the child’s usual physiological range of motion using a high-velocity, low-amplitude thrust”.

The ban will also extend to spinal manipulation using an Activator device, otherwise known as "the stick that goes click".

Chiropractors have promoted spinal realignment in young children for the treatment of colic, sleeping troubles and poor breastfeeding.

And some chiropractors believe that correcting spinal misalignments — or 'asymmetries' — that are allegedly caused during vaginal birth can prevent future developmental problems.

The Australian Chiropractors Association, the profession’s main industry group representing some 3000 chiropractors, said it was disappointed by the ban.

“Chiropractic should not be singled out for age-related regulatory restrictions when medical practitioners, physiotherapists and osteopaths can all provide similar care,” the association said.

"There is an existing system of regulation dealing with risk which is, and continues to be, effective.

“There is little evidence of harm associated with paediatric spinal manipulation therapy, and in Australia, chiropractors provide care to more than 30,000 children [under 18] every week.

"We firmly believe that chiropractors should remain an important part of a child’s healthcare team.”

Both the RACGP and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians have called for a ban on chiropractic paediatric spinal manipulation.

A 2012 Cochrane Review of manipulative therapies for infantile colic concluded the studies — which included five randomised trials — were too small and the quality was too poor to draw confident conclusions.

And three years ago, the [RACGP urged members to stop referring patients to chiropractors](#) and to "seriously reconsider any support for chiropractic involvement in patient care”.

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**More information:**

- [Chiropractic Board of Australia's interim policy on spinal manipulation](#)

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- [Cochrane\\_Review\\_2012.](#)

### Comments

#### Dr Michael Glikzman

*22 hours 53 minutes ago*

Why only for the under 2s, @AHPRA?

#### Dr Evan Ackermann

*20 hours 59 minutes ago*

The original advice from the RACGP 3 years ago - which was based on a review of evidence - still stands.

#### Dr Mehdi Zahedpur

*20 hours 58 minutes ago*

There are many people who pay for quackery and consider that medical service. They effectively pay a tax on their ignorance. Crooks collect that tax.

#### Dr Gabriella Palomares

*20 hours 38 minutes ago*

This is interesting...

#### Dr Sarah Morgan

*20 hours 41 minutes ago*

“Children have died and become paralysed as a result of spinal manipulation, with nine severe cases collected in a 2007 study published in Pediatrics...In 2013, an Australian chiropractor broke a baby's neck.”

#### Dr Andrew Paul

*7 hours 20 minutes ago*

Sarah Morgan that baby you referred to had congenital spondylitis and the chiropractor was cleared by APHRA as not causing any injury to the child.