



DO YOU HAVE A TEXT NECK CONDITION OR SYNDROME?

Introduction

The last time I wrote about an Information Technology based clinical article was in 1996 just after the rapid growth of the mouse based Windows 95 platform! As you can imagine the IT/ computing world has grown exponentially since then and not a day goes by when the latest and greatest that you purchase becomes yesterday's news within the next few days, sometimes even 24 hours.

Just early this year IT bloggers were talking about iPad4 or iPad3s just 24 hours after its release and the IT magazines are already rife with speculation.

Sadly one aspect of computing has not changed – that is the user interface- with that of the devices we invent and spawn. This user interface is the Human Body....



Common devices @ home and @ work...

The Human Body

Since I last checked when I woke up, I still possess the same number of limbs, torso and delightfully a head. Agreeable there are subtle differences in the neonates being born with medical scientists speculating about bigger heads and more delivery issues with these new born babies.

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Perhaps our brains are adapting to the rapid changes in the world, the world wide web, the presence of Goggle – but the Biomechanical and Neuromuscular condition and capabilities of the Human has NOT changed.

In the 90s it was the OOS (Occupational Overuse Syndrome), and in the 00s it was the CTS (Cumulative Trauma Syndromes) and in the new era – it is the TEXT neck.

I am probably even getting one typing this clinical article right now if I am not careful! Read on.

Text Neck – The Causation

Imagine the plethora of multi media devices now available to the young and old. From portable laptops we have moved to notebook and from there to pads and tablets and now even an interface between tablets and docking desktops and laptop.

Whatever the computer or multimedia device – it is generally agreed that the size of these machines have gone smaller. Then there is also the new era of Smartphone which though produced with increasing larger screens, still have either touch type keyboards or QWERTY keyboards which are designed for squirrels to type on.

With these smaller devices, the human body has to try to accommodate these changes and with it we notice the following changes to the body:

1. Posture change. Most TEXT syndrome patients are starting to develop forward curvatures or kyphosis angles.
2. Neck changes. Protrusion of the neck which causes a reverse of the natural convex curve of the neck joints or vertebrae;
3. Shoulders. Elevated shoulders due to the positioning required to hold and poise with these devices which though light can become progressively ‘heavier’ as the nerves from the neck to the shoulder to the arms become fatigued;
4. Visual Accommodation. The need for closer proximity to view the smaller screens thus causing the earlier onset of presbyopia or long sightedness normally seen in adults over 50 years of age;
5. Finger. Repositioning of finger for closer centration of the touch screen or QWERTY keyboard thus producing a gradual deviation and increase in finger / wrist and overstrain and actual finger deviations.



Associated Symptoms

Apart from the above biomechanical and postural changes observed and reported by patients, our practitioners at Perth Integrated Health are also observing the following:

1. Reported increase in headaches especially those that emanate from the base of the skull to the sides of the head (temporal region) or front of the head (frontalis);
2. Dizziness and inability to refocus and accommodate after constant forward flexion of the neck. These are early warning signals that the nerves of the neck are going through a major overstrain and in the worst case scenarios can used brachial plexus injuries.
3. Numbness of the fingers in certain positions of the neck which is associated with #2;
4. Loss of power of grip and inability to achieve gross muscle movements. This is because the fine prehension skills have over ridden the gross movements;
5. Poor concentration and irritability;
6. Decreased sleep and proper sleep patterns;
7. Nervous twitching of the neck and shoulder muscles.
- 8.

If you have some or more of these symptoms, you should seek appropriate clinical help immediately and not let symptoms persist.

What We Do @ Perth Integrated Health (PIH)

At PIH we are not about a turf war between health professionals but the reality of focused patient care. There are times such as this where a team centered focus to recovery is crucial.

Patients who present with these conditions will undertake a clinical EMG Thermal scan to ascertain the neural output of the said region and also a clinical examination by our practitioners.

They will go through the postural analysis and determine your Active Range of Motion (AROM) as well as Passive ROM (PROM) to determine functionality of the body. Analysis of the body biomechanics specifically that of the inter play between the shoulder girdle (scapulae and shoulder joint) is crucial and from there a determination can be made about the best cause of action.

This may involve one or some of the following techniques which we employ with the use of proper clinical technology:

1. Soft Tissue therapy with our Occupational Therapist

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2. Key Module therapy for muscles, ligaments and joints by our Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist
3. HUBER dynamic movement and postural alignment with our Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist
4. Stretches and Proper Exercise Physiological Techniques with our Exercise Physiologist and Personal Trainer
5. Workplace Ergonomics by our Occupational Therapist or Occupational Health Consultant
6. Cross Training / Fitness / Rehabilitation Programs run by PIH and our sister companies the Perth Integrated Health Trisports Group or Perth Integrated Health Cycling Group.

Help is @ Hand

If you need clinical assistance and proper direction and the path towards proper recovery and rehabilitation contact us on 9240 5266 or 9364 8626 for an appointment or email:

appointments@pihc.com.au

If you also need assistance with problem solving on IT based ergonomic conditions at home and at the workplace, we have been consulting on this since 1991 and we can also assist. There are solutions human based and environmental that can be explored and with our multi modal team, we have the expertise to do so.

For specific queries related to the above please email me at: ianwee@pihc.com.au

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Ian Wee has been involved with the treatment of information technology professionals since the early 1990s. His clinical work in 1993 and 1996 saw national prominence where he worked with professionals in the industry to prevent the effects of Computing on Spinal Muscular conditions. His research and work was featured then in the West Australian, ABC News, ABC Radio and Channel 7 Today Tonight Program. In 2012 Ian's battle with TEXT Neck and associated condition carries on in his quest to assist with the proper interplay between man and machine for better functional performance.

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