

## Diagnostic Assessment of Patients with Cervicogenic Headaches



### Assessment of Cervicogenic Headaches

A cervicogenic headache is a headache that results from the pain referred from a source in the neck and perceived in one or more regions of the head and face (HIS, 2004)

The dominant features of a cervicogenic headache include:

- Unilateral head pain.
- Pain beginning in the occipital or upper cervical region.
- Tenderness of the neck muscles.
- Limitation of the neck range of motion.

### Diagnosis

In a study from 2010 Hall, et al. demonstrated good inter-rater reliability for manual examination of the upper cervical spine in 60 subjects with cervicogenic headaches.

In the study C1/2 was the most commonly found to be the primary cause of the patients' headache symptoms with a positive test in 63-80% of cervicogenic headache patients. (Hall 2010, Zito 2006)

### Flexion Rotation Test

The best single test to confirm cervicogenic headaches was to be the flexion rotation test.

To perform a flexion rotation test the patient is positioned supine. Head is flexed maximally as in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Flexion Rotation Test

While maintaining flexed position the head is rotated bilaterally to assess range of motion with ending position as shown in Figure 2.

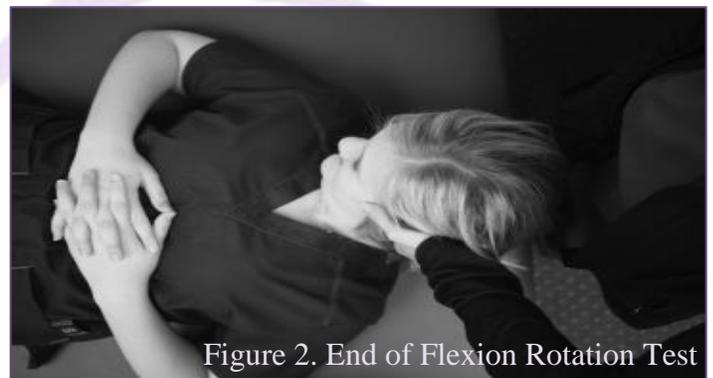


Figure 2. End of Flexion Rotation Test



## Diagnosis Continued...

### Normative Values

In studies to determine normal range of motion in asymptomatic subjects range of motion was found to be between 42-45 degrees.

### Reliability and Validity

Symptomatic subjects showing flexion rotation tests of less than 32 degrees are considered positive for cervicogenic headaches.

Sensitivity of the FRT was found to be 91% along with specificity of 90% (Ognice et al 2007).

### Conclusion

On patients suffering with headaches we can confidently assess cervical involvement by performing a flexion rotation test. If the patient shows ROM less than 32° it is likely that they are suffering from cervicogenic headaches and treatment should involve the upper cervical spine.

**If you suspect a patient is suffering from cervicogenic headache symptoms, physical therapy treatment is an effective treatment option.**

**At PRO Therapy we promise to give your patients the highest level of treatment to achieve faster, more effective headache relief.**

**We will do all we can to have your patients THANK YOU for sending them to our care.**

**To refer a patient, please call 928-854-4776 or fax patient info to 928-854-4857.**

### Positive Outcomes



“After three weeks of therapy, my neck mobility improved 100%, if not more! PRO Therapy is the best!”

~Kurt Krueger



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