



Letter to Editors

Reply on comments by Demetriou et al. on: *Cervical artery dissection: Initial asymptomatic phase or healing phase? A counter-hypothesis*

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

cervical artery dissection
asymptomatic dissection
healing phase
cervical manipulation
neck pain
stroke risk

Dear Editor,

I thank Demetriou et al. for their comments [1] on my paper published in *Medical Hypotheses* entitled: *Cervical artery dissection: Initial asymptomatic phase or healing phase? A counter-hypothesis* [2].

The limitations they note—particularly that the proposed temporal sequence has not been demonstrated by prospective longitudinal imaging or pathology, that asymptomatic onset and a healing phase are not mutually exclusive, and that the absolute numbers of asymptomatic cases in existing epidemiologic studies are small—were already acknowledged in the original manuscript. As stated in the Limitations section, the proposed progression “remains a hypothesis and would benefit from dedicated longitudinal imaging studies with serial clinical correlation in individual patients.” The paper was framed throughout as a counter-hypothesis, not as an established mechanism or a basis for changing standards of care.

The discussion of migraine was likewise presented with explicit caveats that further prospective investigation is required and that no current guidelines list migraine as a contraindication; the paper therefore did not claim the association establishes a change in clinical recommendations. The cutaneous laceration comparison was offered strictly as an illustrative analogy for the temporal dissociation between symptom resolution and persistent imaging findings, not as a claim of identical biology between cutaneous and arterial healing.

The modest clinical suggestion of a thorough recent-history screen for neck pain and/or headache prior to cervical manipulative therapy follows from the hypothesis and complements existing calls for greater awareness of under-recognized cervical artery dissection [3,4].

Respectfully,

Steven Brown, DC.

Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies

During the preparation of this work the author used Grok, an AI language model developed by xAI, to assist with drafting, editing,

refining language and readability, improving structure and flow, and generating suggested highlights. After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the published article.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Steven Brown: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Conceptualization. **DC:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Conceptualization.

Ethics statement

Not applicable.

Funding

This work was not funded by grants from any university, company, nonprofit, organization, or agency.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships which may be considered as potential competing interests: Steven Brown, DC, reports a relationship with BCA Professional Services, LLC that includes: consulting or advisory, employment, paid expert testimony, speaking and lecture fees, and travel reimbursement. Steven Brown, DC, reports a relationship with American Specialty Health Incorporated that includes: consulting or advisory, speaking and lecture fees, and travel reimbursement. If there are other authors, they declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mehy.2026.112111>

Received 26 July 2026; Received in revised form 3 August 2026; Accepted 4 August 2026

Available online 7 August 2026

0306-9877/© 2026 Elsevier Ltd. All rights are reserved, including those for text and data mining, AI training, and similar technologies.

References

- [1] Demetrious J, et al. Comment on: cervical artery dissection: initial asymptomatic phase or healing phase? A counter-hypothesis. *Med. Hypotheses* 2026;214:112091. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mehy.2026.112091>.
- [2] Brown S. Cervical artery dissection: initial asymptomatic phase or healing phase? A counter-hypothesis. *Med. Hypotheses* 2026;214:112074. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mehy.2026.112074>.
- [3] Chaibi A, Russell MB. A risk-benefit assessment strategy to exclude cervical artery dissection in spinal manual-therapy: a comprehensive review. *Ann. Med.* 2019;51(2):118–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07853890.2019.1590627>.
- [4] Rushton A, et al. International framework for examination of the cervical region for potential of vascular pathologies of the neck prior to Orthopaedic Manual Therapy

(OMT) intervention: International IFOMPT Cervical Framework ©(2020) [Online]. Available, <https://www.jospt.org/doi/10.2519/jospt.2022.11147>.

Steven Brown, DC*

*University of Bridgeport, Instructor, Health Sciences Postgraduate
Department, 126 Park Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06604, United States of
America*

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: drbrown@brownchiro.com (DC).