

Indian Milking?

By Cherry Bond and Suzanne Adamson

Outside the IAIM, there has been a negative theory circulating that the Indian Milking stroke may cause varicose veins in Indian women.

As several of our IAIM Members have been concerned about this suggested implication, we have been asked to address the subject.

We have not been able to find any evidence to support this rumour.

- We did a thorough and systematic search ourselves and did not find any evidence.
- We contacted a Cochrane researcher (Angela Underdown) who also could not find any evidence.
- We contacted a doctor who is practicing in India (Dr GB Sharma) who stated:

"Your interesting query on high prevalence of varicose veins (venous insufficiency) to Indian women is due to Indian Milking massage is very big surprise. These claims are not correct and without any scientific support".

His full reply follows on the next page.

- We contacted a Consultant Vascular Surgeon (Mr M P Jenkins) who is Chief of Surgery and Cardiovascular & Renal Services at a leading London Hospital who commented:

"Have not heard of any such problems and very much doubt this could be a problem. The valves are actually venous and the main source of varicose veins in later life is valve failure within the long saphenous vein running medially from the ankle to the groin. I very much doubt that even downward strokes (pushing blood against the valves) would be robust enough to cause damage as anything rough enough to do this would also cause pain at the time".

Thank you to all the CIMIs who enquired about this topic. It is so important that our Association maintains its professional reputation and addresses any challenges to the safety of our practice.



Full reply from Dr GB Sharma

Your interesting query on high prevalence of varicose veins (venous insufficiency) to Indian women is due to Indian Milking massage is a very big surprise. Competitive organization claims are not correct and without any scientific support.

I have given my opinion in following points:

1. Venous insufficiency in pregnancy
2. Strong risk factor for venous insufficiency
3. Indian doctors discourages post natal massage.
4. Varicose veins due to massage
5. Arterial and Venous enhancement movement in massage therapy

1. Venous insufficiency in pregnancy

Pregnancy is high risk period for venous insufficiency is given very well in the following website.

<http://www.mustela.com/en/main.html#/expert-advice/aching-legs-expert-file>

Pregnancy

This is a high risk period. Venous circulation in the legs can be considerably perturbed. The risk of venous insufficiency increases with the number of pregnancies carried through to full term. There is a 23% risk during the first pregnancy whereas it increases to 31% by the 4th. Some varicose veins regress after pregnancy with other persist and thus require further attention.

The increase in volume of the uterus leads to compression of the main vein which enables blood to return of the heart, mainly during the 3rd quarter. But even from the first quarter, the special hormonal climate encourages a reduction in venous drainage and stagnation of blood in the veins.

Pregnancy hormones make the vein wall fragile and reduce the tone of the blood vessels. Oestrogen promotes swelling (oedemas) and progesterone modifies the walls and the dilation of blood vessels.

In addition, the increase in weight, blood volume (20 to 30%) and vein pressure (x 2 or 3) all participate in increasing the pressure in the veins of the legs. The valves are distanced from one another, one after the other, by stretching of the veins and no longer play their non-return role.

Symptoms vary greatly from one woman to another and from one pregnancy to another:

from a simple beauty issue to disabling pain. In addition, the symptom may regress a few weeks after the end of the pregnancy.

2. Strong risk factor for venous insufficiency

Why prevalence of venous insufficiency is very high in some population ? Please check the following website:

<http://www.mustela.com/en/main.html#/expert-advice/aching-legs-expert-file>

Everyone may be concerned, but in a very unequal way....

The strongest risk factors are:

1. Heredity

50% of children born from a mother with venous insufficiency will suffer from it; if both parents are affected the risk rises to 90% for women. On the other hand, if there is no history of it in the family the risk of being affected by it is only 20%.

2. Standing working all day, walking very slowly

Hence some types of work are particularly exposed to it (tradesmen and women, nurses, waitresses, etc). prolonged periods of sitting are also bad as it obstructs venous return (long journeys by train or plane, sedentary jobs etc). Generally speaking a sedentary lifestyle is an aggravating factor in venous insufficiency.

3. Being overweight, obesity and a lot of fatty infiltration in the legs

The excess weight exercised by the body on the legs increases venous blood pressure and encourages a sedentary lifestyle.

4. Hormones, especially female

Women are twice as concerned by it than men.....

5. Age

Ageing of the vein walls leads to a loss of tone and elasticity. 65% of people over 60 are concerned.



3. Indian doctors discourages post-natal massage

I have not come across any scientific study published or quoted by the Indian medical doctors.

4. Varicose veins due to massage

Dr Mark Papenhausen, a Vascular Surgeon, has given his opinion shown below and taken from the following website:

http://www.providence.org/everett/programs_and_services/vascular_center/e50expert.htm

Question: My husband used to massage my legs because the muscle would knot up. This has caused me to have valve problems and swollen feet. Will I have to wear support hose or will the veins and valves correct themselves?

Answer: Massage of the legs should not cause damage to the valves as the veins are fairly well protected. Reasons for the valves in your legs to fail include genetics (mother or sister with varicose veins), pregnancy, prolonged standing or strenuous lifting. If the valves in the legs have failed, then leg swelling and discomfort can occur. The degree of symptoms and treatment depends on which set of veins has been affected. The deep veins lay within the muscles themselves and damage to valves here can cause leg swelling that is not correctable by surgery. If the superficial vein valves have failed, such as in the saphenous vein, then ablation of the veins can help alleviate pain and swelling. A vascular surgeon would be the best person to evaluate and treat this condition.

Dr Mark Papenhausen, Vascular Surgeon, Radia Center for Vascular Disease

5. Arterial and Venous enhancement movement in massage therapy

I liked the description of Arterial and Venous enhancement movements described in the book *Introduction to Massage Therapy* by Mary Beth Braun and Stephanie J Simonson. It states:

Arterial Enhancement Movement

Oxygenated blood is pushed through the arteries by the forceful muscular contraction of the heart and continues with the help of gravity to flow to the cells and tissues throughout the body. The heart, as long as it is contracting will continue to push blood into the arteries. Using the mechanical concept of pressure building behind a dam, a massage therapist can intentionally encourage arterial blood flow. The therapist can apply rhythmic, manual compression strokes that progressively move away from the heart along an artery.

Venous enhancement movements

A massage therapist can enhance a client's venous return during a session by active or passive contraction of the client's muscles.

In case you need any other help feel free to contact me.

With warm regards
Dr GB Sharma

For more information please visit our website:

www.iaim.org.uk