

Understanding Primary Headache Disorders

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ABSTRACT

Among the most prevalent and incapacitating conditions in the globe are primary headache disorders, such as migraine, cluster headache, and tension-type headache. There are few therapeutic options and a significant likelihood of misdiagnosis due to the uncertain pathophysiology of primary headache problems. The main headache disorders, their types, and their causes have all been outlined in this article.

Keywords: Primary Headache Disorders, Types, Causes, Management

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Introduction

Primary headache disorders are a group like tension-type headaches, migraines, and cluster headaches, are some of the most common and debilitating conditions worldwide. Unfortunately, there aren't many treatment choices available, and because we don't fully understand what causes them, they're often misdiagnosed (1). According to the 2019 Global Burden of Disease Survey, headache disorders are among the top five causes of DALYs (disability-adjusted life years) (2). According to data, the prevalence of tension-type headaches was 26.0% (males 23.4%, ladies 27.1%), and migraine was around 14.0% (males 8.6%, females 17.0%) (3).

Types of primary headache disorders

There are three most common types primary headache disorders:

Migraines

Migraine is considered the most common primary headache disorder. It is a debilitating illness with recurrent headache attacks that consistently last 4–72 hours, characterized by unilateral location, as seen in Fig. 1., pulsing quality, exacerbation by regular physical activity, susceptibility to light and sound, nausea, and vomiting (4, 5). Migraine typically affects people between the ages of 35 and 45 and typically starts during adolescence. Perhaps due to hormonal effects, it is more prevalent among women. Children usually have shorter migraine durations and more noticeable stomach symptoms (6). The headache usually goes away gradually. For some patients, the headache disappears after a few hours of sleep. Some patients discover that throwing up will stop an attack. Many patients do not feel completely normal again for a while, even after the headache has subsided (7). The etiology of migraine is unclear; it is believed to be caused by the production of inflammatory chemicals that create discomfort around the head's blood vessels and neurons. Certain foods, alcohol, and sleep disturbances can all cause it (6, 8).

Tension-type headache

Tension-type headaches are another type of the primary headache disorder and are characterized by tightness or pressure that frequently resembles a band around the head and occasionally extends into or out of the neck as seen in Fig. 1. They could be brought on by stress or linked to neck musculoskeletal issues. It is more prevalent in women than men and frequently in adolescence (6, 9). It is occurring on less than 15 days each month. Although they might remain for several days, episodic attacks typically last for few hours (6). It is unclear what causes tension-type headaches. However, there are a number of variables, such as genetic, environmental, muscle, and dietary circumstances. According to the literature, migraine has multiple etiologies—specifically, genetic and environmental causes (9).

Cluster headache

It is a type of primary headache disorder, and it is a one-sided (unilateral) headache, localized in or around the eye, eyebrow, or near the temple area as seen in Fig. 1 (6, 10). It is characterized by a feeling of restlessness or agitation in addition to at least one of the following symptoms: tearing of the eye, nasal congestion, drooping eyelid, constriction of the pupil on the affected side, and sweating of the forehead and face (11). It is more common

in men than in women (6). The exact origin of cluster headaches is unknown to researchers (12). They appear to be connected to the body's abrupt release of serotonin or histamine, smoking, drinking alcohol, switching to a higher altitude, exercise or effort, heat from a bath or the weather, and use of cocaine (13).

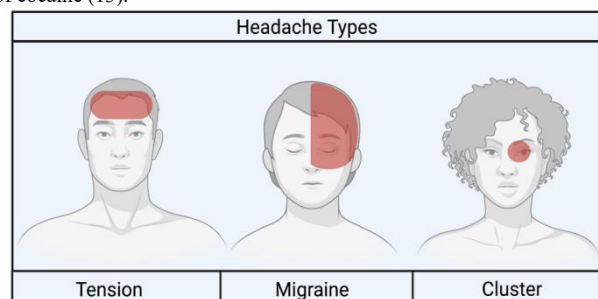


Figure 1: Types of primary headache disorders (14)

Social and economic burdens of primary headache disorders

People's productivity and interpersonal relationships might be negatively impacted by migraines and other headaches. Despite the often-crippling effects, people frequently keep trying to work. People's relationships, financial status, professions and/or security, and mental health may all be impacted by headache-related productivity loss. Additionally, it costs businesses and society money (6).

Treatment of primary headache disorders

Accurate diagnosis, identification of the conditions, and suitable treatment are necessary for the management of primary headache disorders. Analgesics, antiemetics, certain anti-migraine medicines, and preventive treatments are the primary drug classes used to treat headache disorders. Analgesics must be given as soon as symptoms (such as visual aura) appear to treat migraines and avoid the accompanying headache. nutritious foods, regular exercise routines, and sleep habits (6, 15, 16).

Conclusion

A significant number of patients worldwide suffer from headaches. It is necessary to rule out malignant secondary instances even if the majority of these patients have primary headaches. For these patients, a thorough physical examination and history will assist in preventing misdiagnosis.

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