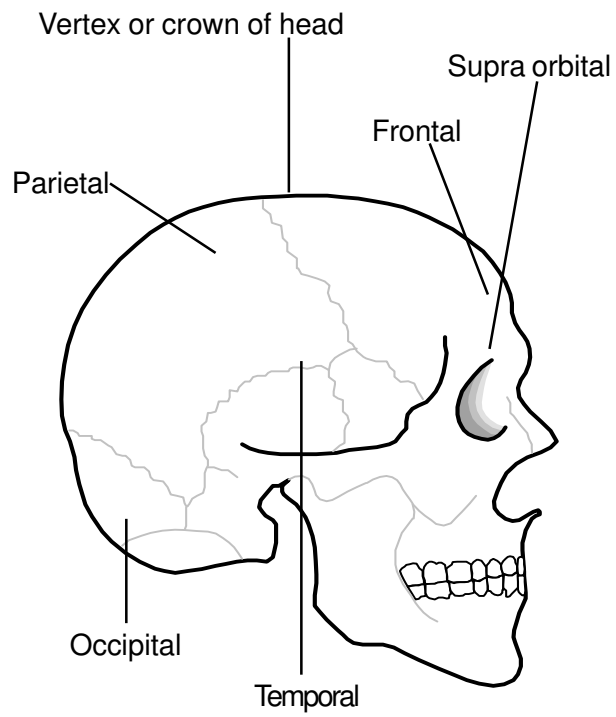


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Some important regions of head

PROLOGUE

The term headache needs no introduction. Rarely one comes across a patient who claims that he never had headache. It is one of the most common complaint and according to some studies ranks ninth among the causes of patient visiting a physician.

Pain is body's most common way of expressing that something is wrong with the health. *A wide variety of factors ranging from simple ones like hunger or tension to very complicated ones like brain tumours can cause headaches. Headaches can be of such severe intensity that they may incapacitate the patient yet may not be life threatening like migraine but on the other hand very mild headaches may be from life-threatening causes like brain tumour.* Therefore, every headache should be carefully looked into and proper medical advice be sought.

..... proper medical advice be sought on headache.

1. When pain is not relieved by usual medication;
2. When pain is severe and interferes with normal daily routine;
3. When headaches increase in frequency, duration, intensity;
4. When patient's headache starts giving headaches to his family and friends; and
5. When along with headache any of the following is present:
 - fever;
 - loss of appetite;
 - loss of consciousness;
 - complete or partial loss of memory;
 - any effect on movements of any body part;
 - numbness of any body part;
 - rash;
 - any effect on speech;
 - stiffness of muscles;
 - any effect on vision;
 - vomiting; and
 - progressive loss of weight.

Chapter 2

COMMON CAUSES OF HEADACHES

As already stated in the previous chapter, headaches can be caused by a variety of factors. Some of most common causes of headaches are briefly described in this chapter.

1. Alcohol

Most of people complain of headaches in the morning on waking up from sleep if previous night they had consumed alcohol. These are generally referred to as '*Morning after headaches* or *hangover headaches*'. The intensity of these headaches vary with different types of alcoholic drinks, the amount consumed, and one's individual susceptibility towards alcohol.

Many patients get headaches from additives added to give taste to the drink as alcohol is tasteless. Alcohol also affects blood glucose levels and cause headache.

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17. Travel

Anxiety, excitement and travel-sickness are common causes of headache during a journey. If one is driving during the journey, then eye-strain from concentrating on the road may also contribute to headache. Similarly, avoidance of food due to travel-sickness* also contributes to headache.

MANAGING COMMON CAUSES OF HEADACHES

Most of the times the patient is able to identify the cause of his headache easily. It is advisable that for these common causes medicine should be the last step in the treatment. ***The first and the most important step is the non-medicinal management of the the problem.*** Once the cause has been identified it becomes very easy to control the headache and also the prevention of its recurrence by observing some simple steps of non-medicinal management. *Non-medicinal management includes simple do's and don'ts to control and prevent headaches.*

1. Alcohol related headaches

Most of the patients who suffer from morning-after headaches can prevent their headaches by *drinking about two glasses of water before going to sleep* on the days when they have taken alcohol. *Adding a little juice of lemon to water* is also beneficial. Few patients feel better after having *a cup*

of coffee.

.....

17. Travel headaches

The patient should *take a good food before the journey* and if he is not sure about the availability of food or its quality during the long journeys, he should carry home made food with him. Eating small quantities at frequent intervals has been of great help to many patients.

Anxiety and excitement about the journey may lead to disturbed sleep which may cause headache even before the journey. Patients who suffer from sleep headaches should try to *get a good sleep on the night before the journey.*

MEDICAL CAUSES OF HEADACHES

Many health problems cause headache. This chapter deals with some such problems. It is not always that headache is necessarily caused due to problems or diseases affecting head. Many times the pain is referred to head from other organs.

1. Headache from causes related to blood and blood vessels

Some conditions of blood and blood vessels like *intracranial hypertension*, *aneurysms* may cause rupture of arteries and lead to *haemorrhage* or bleeding causing severe and intense headache. *Blood clot* formed due to internal bleeding, if large enough, will produce effects on the body depending upon its location.

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9. Other rare causes of headache

Some other rare causes of headache are brain oedema, hydrocephalus etc..

If the patient suspects any of the above mentioned conditions to be the cause of his headache then he must take proper medical advice and treatment.

CLASSIFICATION OF HEADACHES

Headaches can be classified into following four types on *pathophysiological* basis :

1. Muscle contraction (tension) headaches;
2. Traction and inflammatory headaches;
3. Idiopathic cranial neuralgias; and
4. Vascular headaches.

1. Muscle contraction or tension headaches

It has been already discussed that painful *contraction of muscles of head and neck produces headache*. Muscle contraction headaches were earlier called as tension headaches. These headaches are characterised by *steady, nonpulsatile aching with sensations of tightness, pressure, drawing, or soreness*. Often the patient gives expressions such as *having a band like constriction around head or a weight on the top of head or as wearing a tight hat* while describing his muscle contraction (tension) headache.

Muscle contraction or tension headache usually *affects both sides* of head and *lasts from a few minutes to a few hours to even a few days*. In some instances they are observed for weeks to months. Manytimes, the patient suffering from muscle contraction headache can identify and cover the exact regions of excessive painfulness by his finger tips.

Muscle contraction (tension) headaches are associated with *anxiety, emotional stress, reserved displeasure or anger*. Working in *wrong postures exercises the muscles in an unaccustomed way resulting in straining of muscles* leading to headache.

Non-medicinal management

Relaxation is the best answer to any type of tension. Mild intensity headache will disappear after *proper rest and relaxation*. Moderate intensity headache will respond to *warm or hot water bath*. *Light massage* also is very beneficial in muscle contraction (tension) headaches.

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4. Vascular headaches

Headaches *involving the blood vessels which supply to the brain* are called vascular headaches. Vascular headaches, usually, are *unilateral* (affecting one side), *throbbing* and *recurrent* over months or years. The affected side may become slightly red in appearance and arteries of the affected side may become tender to touch.

Migraine is a type of vascular headache.

On the *causative basis* headaches have been classified into following types according to homoeopathic literature :

1. Anaemic headaches

Headaches associated with anaemia are referred to as Anaemic headaches. In anaemia the oxygen carrying capacity of blood may be decreased. The pathophysiology of symptom production may be due to less amount of oxygen being received by the brain.

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10. Rheumatic headaches

Headaches from arthritic and rheumatic factors are included in this group.

MEDICINES FOR COMMON CAUSES OF HEADACHES

Homoeopathic system of medicine founded by a German doctor, Samuel Hahnemann, is based on the law of similars. According to this law, a medicine will cure a patient suffering from symptoms that it can produce in healthy humans. *Symptoms are the basis of selection of medicines in homoeopathy.* Causative and precipitating factors form an integral part of symptom-picture.

Most of the times, the patient is able to remember clearly what precipitated his headache. These precipitating factors are an important criteria for selection of homoeopathic medicines especially when the symptoms are ambiguous. This chapter has names of medicines found useful for headaches occurring after some common causative/precipitating factors.

1. Alcohol related headaches

There are many homoeopathic medicines useful for headaches caused from alcohol. *Some important medicines* are given in the table on the following page.

.....

17. Travel-headaches

Most of the travel headaches respond to Cocc.. If the cause of travel-headaches is lack of sleep or hunger then medicine may be selected from the list of medicines mentioned for headaches from lack of sleep or hunger headaches.

Some other precipitating factors and medicines useful for headaches precipitated or aggravated by them are given below :

<i>Precipitating factor</i>	<i>Important medicines</i>
Anger	Bry., Cham., Nux-v., etc
.....	
Worm infestation	Calc., Cina, Sil., Sulph., etc.

Chapter 7

MEDICINES FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF HEADACHES

Medicines are also selected on the basis of type of headache. Like prescription based causation, the selection of medicine based on type of headache is also important especially at the times when the symptom-picture is not clear and the exciting factor unknown. Some important medicines for different types of headaches are listed below :

MEDICINES WITH INDICATIONS

Some commonly used medicines for headaches with their indications are :

1. Aconite : Headaches which *come suddenly after exposure to cold dry winds*. There is anxiety and restlessness. Burning headache, as if brain is moved by boiling water. Violent stupefying headache with sensation of fullness. Better in open air.

2. Antimonium crudum : Headaches *due to over-eating, disordered stomach, eating candy, drinking acid wines*. Aching worse in vertex, heaviness in forehead. Worse from bathing, especially river bathing.

.....

38. Zincum metallicum : *Occipital pain with weight on vertex. Forehead cool with base of brain hot. Automatic motion of head and hands. Headache from smallest quantity of wine.*

Chapter 9

MIGRAINE

The term migraine comes from the word *hemicrania*. Hemi means half and crania means head. The term hemicrania was used for headaches affecting one side of the head. The word hemicrania, over the period of time, was corrupted to migraine. *Migraine is unilateral pulsating headache of moderate to severe intensity usually lasting for 4 to 72 hours.*

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It is association of migraine with such symptoms which is responsible for migraine to be often referred as *sick headache*.

INCIDENCE OF MIGRAINE

Migraine *affects people of all age groups*. Migraine can begin at any age. Earlier it was thought that migraines stop troubling the ladies after menopause and men after the age of 50. But now it is known that migraine can begin even after 50 years of age though this is very rare.

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From these figures it can be inferred that migraine does have tendency to pass from one generation to the other.

SYMPTOMS OF MIGRAINE

Important symptoms of migraine are given below.

1. **One-sided headache**

As already mentioned that the word migraine is corrupted form of hemicrania which means one sided headache. Unilateral headache is one of the main symptom of migraine. But it is important to note that *it is not the same side which is involved during each attack*. In fact, *switching of sides is not uncommon in migraine*. Sometimes, the headache becomes bilateral (affect both sides) for short durations.

.....

9. **Blurred vision**

Headache in migraine often accompanies blurring of

vision with flashes of light.

Other symptoms which may accompany migraine are diarrhoea, sweating, oedema etc.. The patient becomes irritable and likes to isolate himself in a dark and quiet room.

It is important to note that all the patients may not be troubled by all the symptoms mentioned above.

MIGRAINE : A TYPICAL ATTACK

A typical migraine attack has five stages. These are as following :

1. Prodromal or premonitory symptoms ;
2. Aura ;
3. Headache and other accompanying symptoms ;
4. Resolution of an attack ; and
5. Postdrome or hangover.

Prodromal or premonitory symptoms

Patients often describe *premonitory symptoms as warning symptoms*. These symptoms *make the patient aware of an impending attack*. Some common prodromal symptoms are :

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Postdrome or hangover

A significant percentage of migraine patients experience postdromal symptoms or symptoms which appear after an attack of migraine. Weakness, tiredness, dullness and aching in muscles are common postdromal symptoms. Very surprisingly, a few patients may also feel extremely well after migraine.

CLASSIFICATION OF MIGRAINE

Migraines have been classified into following types :

1. Classic migraine ;
2. Common migraine ;
3. Complicated migraine ;
4. Ophthalmoplegic migraine ; and
5. Hemiplegic migraine.

Classic migraine

Classic or classical migraine is also known as *migraine with aura*.

.....

Hemiplegic migraine

In this type of migraine *paralysis or weakness of one side of the body precede or accompany migraine attack*. There may be confusion, aphasia (loss of power of

expression), and other neurological symptoms. These symptoms may last for less than a hour and disappear. It may not the same side of body which is affected in each attack. At times, altering of sides in each attack may occur over the years.

COMPLICATIONS OF MIGRAINE

Usually migraine attacks end without any complication. The symptoms which the patient experiences along with the headache get reversed. Rarely migraine does have complications.

Migrainous infarction

In this condition the patient continues to suffer from one or more symptoms of aura or premonitory phase even after days of obtaining relief from the migraine attack.

Status migrainosus

In this condition the migraine lasts and continues for more than 72 hours. It is a very rare condition.

Proper investigations and treatment are must in any case of complications.

MIGRAINE : THEORIES AND EXPLANATION

There are four important theories which explain about what happens during a migraine attack. These are :

1. Vascular theory ;
2. Biochemical theory ;
3. Neurological theory ; and
4. Allergic theory.

Vascular theory

This theory deals with changes in the blood supply to the brain during a migraine attack.

According to this theory, before the attack of migraine there is a decrease in the blood supply to the brain. There occurs *vasoconstriction*

.....

Allergic theory

According to this theory migraines have an allergic background. They are one of the many manifestations of allergy*.

EXCITING AND PRECIPITATING FACTORS

Attacks of migraine can be excited and precipitated by a variety of factors. Some of them are given below :

1. Environmental factors ;
2. Exertion related factors ;
3. Dietary factors ;
4. Physiological factors ;
5. Itarogenic factors ; and
6. Other factors.

Environmental factors

Environmental factors which can precipitate an attack of migraine are following :

1. Odours and smells ;

.....

Other factors

This group includes :

1. Travels and journeys ;
2. Lack or excess of sleep ;
3. Fasting or missing meals ; and
4. Allergies.

NON-MEDICINAL MANAGEMENT

The non-medicinal management has two main objectives. These are :

1. To obtain relief at the time of an attack ;
2. Prevention of repeated migraine attacks.

For relief at the time of an attack

When a migraine attack is precipitated the patient should *stop all activities which cause physical or mental strain*. In majority of patients any kind of stress and strain increases the intensity of the headache.

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For prevention of repeated migraine attacks

If the patients fears or has a feeling that he is going to suffer an migraine attack, he should *go to quite, dark room and try to sleep. Many patients can prevent their migraine*

by sleeping.

The above mentioned changes in the life-style of the patient are very effective in preventing repeated migraine attacks. One should remember that ***prevention is always better and more comfortable than cure.***

MIGRAINOUS NEURALGIA

Migrainous neuralgia is more commonly known as cluster headache. Like migraine, cluster headache is also a type of vascular headache. It is very rare in comparison to migraine.

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The *headaches comes on abruptly* and are characterised by *intense throbbing pain behind the nostril and one eye*. There is watering from eye and nose. The pupil of the affected eye may become constricted. The affected eye may become red and swelling may appear on its lids. The skin over the throbbing area becomes red. *Rarely an attack lasts longer than 2 hours.*

MEDICINES FOR MIGRAINE

Correct medicine not only provides relief during the attack but also reduces the intensity of future attacks as well as decreases the frequency of the attacks. Some commonly used homoeopathic medicines along with their indications are discussed below :

1. Arsenic album : There is periodic, throbbing, stupefying headache over left eye. Headache is *temporarily relieved by cold applications* only to return strongly afterwards.

14. Spigelia : Spigelia is useful for *periodical, violent and throbbing pain* which *begins in the occiput* mostly during mornings and *spreads over the head to settle over the left eye* and left temple. The patient feels as if there is band around head. Patient is full of fears and highly sensitive. There is *aggravation from touch, noise*, turning.

The patient feels better by lying on right side with head high. Headache is also relieved by firm pressure.

Some other useful medicines :

Argentum nitricum, Belladonna, Bryonia alba, Calcarea carbonica, Coffea, Colocynth, Diptrix odorata, Lachesis, Lachnanthes, Theridion, Veratrum album, etc..

Some important medicines for right sided and left sided migraine are given in the following table :

Chapter 20

EPILOGUE

The aim of the patient should be *to prevent attacks rather than to seek relief and cure when one is suffering from it*. This can be achieved by changes in the following habits.

.....

The patient should always remember that simple changes in life-style, diet and working habits go a long way in helping to prevent migraine.

