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The Italian Collaborative Group for the Study of Psychopathological Factors in Primary Headache was founded in 1991, as a subcommittee of the Italian Society for the Study of Headaches. The group has the task to clarify the hard to understand relationships between psychological factors and headache.

The Group encompasses the Headache Centres of Bari, Florence, Milan, Padua, Parma, Pavia, Perugia, Rome, Rome-L'Aquila, and Trieste, together with two psychiatric consultants (Table 1).

The work of the Group has been going on for almost ten years. It began with a study on psychiatric comorbidity in patients with tension-

type headache using a structured psychiatric interview to obtain psychiatric diagnoses in compliance with DSM-III-R. That first study was completed in 1994; it was presented at a congress in Bari and then published in Italian [1] and in the journal *Cephalalgia* [2]. The comparison with a sample of patients suffering from migraine without aura, assessed with the same methods, enabled the Group to publish an article in *The Journal of Headache and Pain* [3].

Chronic headache represents the most recent field of research of the Group. The transformation of episodic pain into daily chronic pain is one of the more complex prob-

Table 1 Members of the Italian Collaborative Group for the Study of Psychopathological Factors in Primary Headache

Co-ordinator: Prof. Francomichele Puca (Bari)

Headache Centres

Bari, F. Puca, S. Genco, M. Savarese, M.P. Prudeniano, C. Monetti, D. De Fidio, V. Scirucchio, T. Francavilla, M. Palumbo, B. Pastore, S. Perilli, E. Di Pietro, A. Tramontano

Florence, F. Sicuteri, M. Nicolodi, S. Canova

Milan, G. Bussone, D. D'Amico, C. Peccarisi, G. Libro

Padua, G. Zanchin, F. Maggioni, R. Licandro, E. Ferruzza

Parma, G.C. Manzoni, F. Granella, C. Schianchi, S. Cavatorta

Pavia, G. Nappi, G. Sandrini, A.P. Verri, A. Proietti Cecchini

Perugia, V. Gallai, C. Firenze, P. Sarchielli, A. Alberti, S. Russo

Rome, V. Guidetti

Rome-L'Aquila, R. Cerbo, A. Carolei, T. Catarci, P. Barbanti

Trieste, G. Relja, G. Nider, N. Koscica

Psychiatric consultants, M. Guazzelli (Pisa), P. Scapicchio (Chieti)

lems from a therapeutic point of view. Psychopathological aspects, in addition to the abuse or disuse of analgesics, seem to be important in the chronic evolution of headache.

The Group's investigation of the development of chronic headache began during a meeting in Florence in April 1996. There, a protocol was established to study adult chronic daily headache sufferers and to seek possible transformation factors related to life events, psychopathological features, psychiatric disorders and analgesic abuse by means of a complex neuropsychological investigation. A broad sample of patients suffering from primary headache for at least 15 days per month over a period of at least 6 months was enrolled in the study. Exclusion criteria were: (1) diagnosis of chronic cluster headache, chronic paroxysmal hemicrania, hemicrania continua or chronic post-traumatic headache; and (2) schizophrenia or cognitive deficit which could impair the co-operation of the patient. The method was based on the administration of the following tools: (1) a chronic daily headache clinical record; (2) a card on analgesic overuse; (3) the scale of stressful events by Peykel; (4) a card for manual palpation of pericranial muscles; (5) the structured clinical interview (SCID-IV) for objective psychiatric diagnoses according to the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria; (6) the PRALP3 computerized Rorschach test for the evaluation of personality traits; (7) the Symptom Checklist 90-R test for psychopathological profiling; (8) the Sickness Impact Profile to assess quality of life; (9) the Illness Behaviour Questionnaire to identify maladaptive ways of perceiving one's functioning; and (10) a test battery for the evalua-

tion of memory function (Rey test, Corsi test, digit span, logical memory, and Buschke's test).

The preliminary results of the research were presented in occasion of the Appulo-Lucana Reunion of the Italian Neurological Society, at Maratea in July 1997 in the Italian Headache Congress, and at Modena in October 1997. A congress devoted to this topic took place at Naples on 21-22 April 1998. In this special supplement to *The Journal of Headache and Pain*, the Group presents the final results regarding a sample of 245 patients suffering from chronic daily headache.

As a background to the study, the problems concerning nosographic aspects of chronic daily headache are stressed in the paper of Nappi et al. [4]. An attempt to explain the deep mechanisms of "planet pain" based on a model for estimating the entity of central sensitisation is provided by Nicolodi and Sicuteri [5]. Palagini et al. reviewed studies concerning psychiatric and psychopathological comorbidity of headache and supporting the hypothesis of a psychoneurobiological loop as the principal mechanism of chronic evolution of headache [6]. The relevance of analgesic abuse in the maintainance of chronic headache was analysed by Pini and Relja [7]. The supplement continues with research reports, starting with the paper of Granella et al. [8] on the clinical interview used for data collection and the description of the case series. The results regarding psychiatric disorders diagnosed in the chronic headache sample by means of the semi-structured interview are reported in the paper of Puca et al. [9]. In light of the memory impairment often associated with headache, the paper of Savarese et al. [10] is

devoted to the memory disorders found in this study sample. The importance of anxiety and depression assessment according to Zung's specific scales is emphasized by Cerbo et al. [11]. D'Amico et al.'s article is based on the assessment of life events and suggests that patients with chronic headache have a peculiar way to react to stress [12]. Peculiar personality profiles revealed by the SCL-90R are described in the paper of Firenze et al. [13]. A confirmation of the diagnostic utility of an old but not surpassed projective test is offered by Scapicchio et al. who exposed the results obtained with the computerised form of Rorschach (PRALP3) [14]. The heavy impact of chronic headache on quality of life and illness behaviour are examined in the article of Prudenzano et al. [15]. To validate the importance of psychological factors in chronic headache, one paper assessed personality with the computerised form of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory II [16]. To stress that in chronic pain planet there are not only psychological factors, but also somatic ones, the supplement is enriched with a review of biochemical and neurotransmittal evidence by Gallai et al. [17] and with an electrophysiological study by de Tommaso et al. [18]. Another argument of this supplement is chronic headache in juvenile age, reported in the paper of Guidetti and co-workers [19]. The final paper [20] contains a summary of the results and a general discussion with some interpretation proposals.

Wishing you a good reading, I would like to express the warmest thanks to the Group that I have the pleasure to co-ordinate and to compliment for this major effort.

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