

MEETING ABSTRACT

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EHMTI-0290. Headaches in patients with autism spectrum disorder

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From 4th European Headache and Migraine Trust International Congress: EHMTIC 2014
Copenhagen, Denmark. 18-21 September 2014

Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by persistent deficits in social communication, social interaction and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests or activities. In general, ASD is associated with pain insensitivity and self-injurious behavior. Support for these associated traits are derived mostly from anecdotal and clinical observations. Headache disorders like migraine can be a disabling condition but none has been reported among individuals with ASD.

Aims

To characterize the headache types experienced by patients with ASD and review their clinical profile.

Methods

A retrospective chart review of patients with ASD who presented in the neurology clinic from January 2011 to April 2013 was performed.

Results

Eighteen patients were identified, 12 males and 6 females. Migraine was the most frequent headache type occurring in up to 61% (11/18) of patients. Eight of these 11 patients have migraine without aura; one with migraine with aura and two patients have both migraine with and without aura. Combined migraine and tension type headache was seen in 3 patients. Three had chronic daily headache and one had probable migraine. Age at presentation ranged from 5-16 years. All patients were verbal and all have co-morbid behavioral and mental health conditions.

Conclusion

Our data show that ASD patients, despite being known to have indifference to pain, can experience headaches; with migraine being the most common headache type in these patients referred in our neurology clinic.

No conflict of interest.

Published: 18 September 2014

doi:10.1186/1129-2377-15-S1-B37

Cite this article as: Victorio: EHMTI-0290. Headaches in patients with autism spectrum disorder. *The Journal of Headache and Pain* 2014 15 (Suppl 1):B37.

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