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Headache is a widespread and costly public health problem. The burden of illness associated with headache is substantial and greatest for the most severely affected sufferers. The burden of illness has individual and societal components. The individual burden is determined by attacks and by decreased quality of life in headache patients and by lost economic activity. Additionally, headache disorders compromise family, social and recreational activities. Societal burden is defined as the economic costs of headache disorders and includes both direct costs (medical care) and indirect costs (impact on work or school). Headache awareness, associated disability and availability of treatment options need to be highlighted. Patients who require care should be encouraged to seek it.

In consideration of the impact of headache on health and economy, 46 organizations dedicated to headache have been founded in 30 different countries. These lay organizations (charitable, non-profit or professional) have been incorporated into the World Headache Alliance (WHA).

<http://www.worldheadachealliance.org>
<http://www.w-h-a.org>

The WHA website is dedicated to sharing information among headache researchers and to increasing the awareness

and understanding of headache as a public health concern.

The official website of WHA provides a comprehensive and updated information for people who suffer from severe headache and for their families and friends. The site facilitates communication between fellow sufferers, their doctors, and their local patient-based WHA member organizations. The most helpful and popular resources and information sources on headache disorders available on the Internet today can be found both by patients and their doctors. If one browses into the three main sections that compose this website, it is possible to find: (1) the latest information on headache and migraine news and research; (2) a global community of headache sufferers and organizations; and (3) headache-related things to do. Of special interest is the link to the great site of History of Science, Technology & Medicine (www.asap.unimelb.edu.au/hstm/hstm.medicine.htm). A review of the sites written by a physician and a WHA member organization has also been listed. The WHA member organization section helps the visitor find a local member group and the activities they are organizing in that area. The 46 lay organizations that are active worldwide in the headache field and associated with WHA represent 30 different nations (Table 1). The following list of the WHA member reports the full number of lay organizations that operate in that country and the individual web address, if available.

Since not all information on the Web is worthy of the time or trust of doctors interested in headache or of headache patients, this full-range Web site should be considered a first stop when searching for headache-related resources.

Table 1 Lay organizations associated with the WHA, by country

Albania	Albanian Headache Bul “Zhan d’ Ark”
Argentina	ALCODOC ALUCER (www.members.xoom.com/lgardella) AMIGAR Autoayuda al Paciente con Cefalea Cronica Cefaclub Hospital de Clinicas
Australia	Brain Foundation
Belgium	Belgian League Against Headache
Brazil	Brazilian Headache Society
Canada	Fondation Québécoise de la Migraine et des Cephalées (www.fqmc.qc.ca) ^a Headache Society of Southern Alberta Help for Headaches (www.headache-help.org) ^a Migraine Association of Canada (www.migraine.ca) ^a
Colombia	ACODOC Asociacion Antioqueña para el Estudio del Dolor de Cabeza (www.cefalea.org)
Denmark	Hovedpineforeningen
Finland	Suomenmigreeniydistys Migranforeningen I Finland Ry (www.migreeni.org)
France	Action Migraine (www.action-migraine.com) Club Migraine et Cephalées
Germany	Bundesverband Deutsche Schmerzilfe c.v. (www.kopfschmerzforum.de ; www.kopschmerztag.de)
Iceland	Migrensamtokin (www.migreni.is) ^a

Table 1 Cont.

Ireland	Migraine Association of Ireland (www.migraine.ie)
Israel	Headache Unit, Meir General Hospital
Italy	Lega Italiana Cefalalgici (www.sameint.it/sisc/lic.htm) ^a Alleanza Cefalalgici Associazione Italiana Lotta alle Cefalee
Japan	Japan Chronic Headache (www.medsci-press.co.jp/JCHO)
Lithuania	Lithuanian Headache Association
Malaysia	Headache Society of Malaysia
Netherlands	Nederlandse Vereniging van Migraine Patienten
New Zealand	NZ Migraine Sufferers Support Group (www.migraine.co.nz)
Norway	Norges Migreneforbund
Poland	Polish Migraine Association
Switzerland	Swiss Migraine Trust Foundation/Migraine Action
Turkey	Headache Friends Association
Sweden	Svenska Migränförbundet
United Kingdom	International Headache Society (www.i-h-s.org) ^a Migraine Action Association (www.migraine.org.uk) ^a The Migraine Trust (www.migrainetrust.org) ^a
Unites States of America	American Council for Headache Education (www.achenet.org) ^a M.A.G.N.U.M. (www.migraines.org) ^a Migraine Association of the Upper Midwest National Headache Foundation (www.headaches.org) ^a Fundacion Puertorriqueña de Dolor de Cabeza
Venezuela	Clinica de Cefaleas, Merida Los Audes Hospital
Yugoslavia	Yugoslav Migraine Association

^a Nationally registered non-profit and/or charitable organization