

POSTER PRESENTATION

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The “care” protocol: outcome of medication overuse headache in a three year follow-up study

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From The European Headache and Migraine Trust International Congress
London, UK. 20-23 September 2012

Introduction

Medication Overuse Headache (MOH) has become one of the major challenges in headache management. The main aim of the present study was to evaluate the factors associated with a negative outcome in a three-year follow-up of subjects diagnosed with MOH.

Methods

All consecutive patients with MOH entering, for the first time, the centre's inpatient detoxification program were analyzed in a prospective, non randomized way. They were enrolled as outpatients and gave their verbal informed consent to undergo the protocol (inpatient detoxification and three follow-up visits in the first year, then six-monthly clinical controls). The diagnosis of MOH was made according to the revised-ICHD-II criteria [1]. All the participants were assessed using an ad hoc patient's record form. Variables analyzed as possible predictors were: gender, age, socio-demographic characteristics, alcohol/coffee/smoking habits, positive family history for drug abuse and/or headache, past medical history, primary headache type, type, duration and quantification of drug overuse and duration of chronic headache. Categorical variables were analyzed with the Chi-square test. For quantitative variables, statistical differences were analyzed with ANOVA. Odds Ratios (ORs) were calculated for dichotomous outcomes as well.

Findings

One-hundred-fifty patients completed the 3-year follow-up (79.3% females, age 46.40±11.31): 13 patients never stopped overuse (Group A), 38 patients stopped drug overuse, but relapsed at least once (Group B) and 99 patients never relapsed (Group C). Patients in Group A

differed from B+C groups because they were more frequently single (OR 0.134;p=0.007) and unemployed (OR=3.273;p=0.04), they took a higher number of acute drugs (p<0.001) and used less frequently coffee (OR 3.273;p=0.044).

Conclusion

The outcome of disease in this group of MOH patients was influenced negatively by the severity of overuse (and possibly of the disease) and by specific socio-economic conditions. Other factors that emerged as possible modifiers of outcome were volutary habits.

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Published: 21 February 2013

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doi:10.1186/1129-2377-14-S1-P175

Cite this article as: Sances et al.: The “care” protocol: outcome of medication overuse headache in a three year follow-up study. *The Journal of Headache and Pain* 2013 **14**(Suppl 1):P175.

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