

MEETING ABSTRACT

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EHMTI-0252. The frequency of acute medication intake relates to its perceived effectiveness in chronic headache patients

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Introduction

Although the benefit of acute pain medications for chronic headaches (≥ 15 days/month) often is limited, patients frequently continue to take them in an attempt to control their pain, which may then result in medication overuse.

Aims

The current study investigates whether the intake of acute medication creates an illusion of control (IoC) and whether an accepting attitude may prevent this IoC in chronic headache patients.

Method

Forty-one chronic headache patients (primarily migraine sufferers) filled out a questionnaire battery (e.g. CPAQ and MIDAS) followed by an adapted IoC Task. During this IoC task, patients were asked on each trial to indicate whether they would (fictively) take a new painkiller to cope with a (fictive) headache day. Afterwards the patient received random information on the effectiveness of the painkiller that day. After the task participants filled out 6 questions on the perceived effectiveness of this painkiller.

Results

Data show that the perceived effectiveness was positively related to the number of times patients have fictively taken the painkiller ($p < .01$) and not to its actual contingency (i.e., actual effectiveness). Secondly, acceptance was positively related to perceived effectiveness of the painkiller ($p < .05$), but did not moderate the

relationship between perceived effectiveness and frequency of medication intake.

Conclusions

Results of the present study suggest that a higher intake of acute medication by chronic headache patients is related to higher perceived effectiveness of the acute medication, independent of its actual effectiveness. This IoC-effect is however not influenced by acceptance.

No conflict of interest.

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