

European Headache Federation

EHF NEWS



www.ehf-org.org

Migraine: an artistic and historical perspective

Headache is a ubiquitous, subjective phenomenon that has occupied human attention from both medico-scientific and artistic and literary perspectives across cultures and throughout human history. This presentation will focus on the ways that headache, particularly migraine, has been expressed throughout the ages in pictures and writings from the earliest recorded 'evidence' to contemporary descriptions and illustrations.

Ancient Egyptian scholars described symptoms and treatments to what might, today, be considered as migraine headaches. It was probably Hippocrates (460 BC) who first distinguished migraine from the broader symptomatology of headaches by identifying unilateral head pain (hemicrania), nausea and regularity of recurrence as particular features of this type of headache. Since that time, references in scholarly texts, including the Christian Bible, have been the subject of academic scrutiny leading to speculation that some of the symptoms described are consistent with a modern definition of migraine. It has also enabled a speculative

list of some famous historical, literary and artistic migraineurs and their possible artistic expression of migraine.

The artistic illustration of migraine, particularly with aura, has also provided a valuable insight into the understanding of the visual experiences of migraineurs because it enables sufferers to 'externalise' a subjective experience. Moreover, the identification of a number of common features of visual disturbances from images drawn by migraineurs has assisted the classification of features such as scintillating scotoma, teichopsia, visual image fragmentation and illusory splitting. Furthermore, the so-called 'Alice in Wonderland' Syndrome - derived from the apparent experiences of the writer Lewis Carroll and described by Todd in 1955 - has identified migraine features that encompass depersonalisation, derealisation, visual illusions and disorders of time perception.

In recent years there has been an 'explosion' of contemporary illustrations of migraine experiences from patients worldwide and the internet has greatly assisted the availability

of these images to wider audiences. In this way artists have been able to depict their migraine experiences to enhance collective insights into the impact of migraine on patients' lives and improve understanding that contributes to diagnosis and treatment. It also provides non-migraineurs with a perception that they would not otherwise experience and enables treating physicians to appreciate the need for effective treatment to ameliorate these potentially distressing symptoms in their migraine patients.

Thus, in summary, the artistic and literary description of migraine experiences by historical and contemporary contributors provides a potentially valuable contribution to our understanding and management of migraine patients, notably in those (eg children) who may be better at illustrating than verbally describing their experiences.

Vincenzo Guidetti presented at the 8th Annual Migraine Meeting, Rome 2008.

EHF News is open to host contributions and proposals from the readers. E-mail your suggestion to: neuronet@libero.it

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The Act when Mild (AwM) study: relevance of the early intake

Triptans have revolutionised acute migraine therapy and have become the mainstay of migraine-specific therapy. As their use has evolved, it has become apparent that the early intake in relation to the onset of acute symptoms is an important issue in optimising their therapeutic benefit (1) and recent studies (2) have provided some evidence that early in-

take of triptans can result in better outcomes.

A clinical trial recently published in *Cephalalgia* (3), the 'Act when Mild' (AwM) study, was specifically designed to minimise methodological constraints associated with previous studies investigating earlier migraine treatment and increased the interpretative value of the results. This was the first time

that was conducted a randomised, four arm, multicentre, multinational, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of a triptan (almotriptan 12.5 mg) to compare outcomes after administration of treatment when pain intensity was mild and within 1 hour of headache onset (mild/early) with outcomes when pain had become

Headache and Internal Medicine: sharing language for common projects

In Rome, during the 7th Congress of European Federation of Internal Medicine (EFIM) and European Headache Federation (EHF) a Joint Section took place focusing on the crucial topic of "Emergency Medicine".



Each year, access to Emergency Rooms in European hospitals interests among 2 to 7% of patients requesting medical assistance for a headache diagnosis. Therefore, a "nation" of over ten million headache patients demands yearly a specific expertise to EU Emergency Room's physicians. Such doctors are specialists in Internal and Emergency Medicine, without specific skills in headache management. A head CT

followed by an intramuscular anti-inflammatory drug is the most frequent approach towards resistant migraine crises, medication overuse headache, cluster headache attacks. EHF/WHO Guidelines are not considered at all yet.

These remarks brought me to think about a meeting between the two main European societies which deal with this matter.

In Rome, at the opening of the 7th Congress of European Federation of

Internal Medicine (EFIM) and European Headache Federation (EHF) a Joint Section took place focusing on the crucial topic of "Emergency Medicine". Participants were Fabio Antonaci (Pavia), Zaza Katsarava (Essen), Giuseppe Licata (Palermo), Stefan Lindgren (Malmö), Paolo Martelletti (Rome), Dominique Valade (Paris).

Live transmissions of the full Joint Section between EFIM and EHF are available free of charge at www.efim.org.

Paolo Martelletti

VII International Congress on Headache in Children and Adolescents – Istanbul

The VII International Congress on Headache in Children and Adolescents (VII ICHCA) was held under the auspices of the International Headache Society at Hilton Hotel Istanbul between 17 and 21 May 2008. More than 270 participants from 38 countries enjoyed the ambitious scientific program as well as the attractions of Istanbul. The bridge across the bosphorus connecting Europe with Asia was a symbol for the congress connecting headache in children and adults.

There were two special lectures, the Bille-Vahlquist lecture on "Milestones in Childhood Headache Research" given by

Prof. George Russell and the IHS lecture on "Menstrual Migraine" given by Prof. Anne MacGregor, another special session was dedicated to legal and historical issues of headache.

The invited lectures covered basic as well as clinical science and included controversies regarding the importance of the cortex vs subcortical structures in the pathophysiology of migraine, treatment of medication overuse headache and the dignity of chronic daily headache.

Free communications comprised 19 oral presentations and 95 posters. The first abstract submitted came from

South Africa and the last from Israel. The poster awards went to T. Eidlitz-Markus, Israel, T.R. Villa, Brazil, T. Hechler, Germany, and L. Dal Zotto, Italy. K. Koriska, Austria was awarded with a students' poster prize.

The final session of the congress, initiated by Prof. Çiçek Wöber-Bingöl, chairwoman of the IHS pediatric subcommittee, was tributed to Prof. Giovanni Lanzi one of the most influential researchers in the field of childhood headache.

The social highlight was a gala night at the Bosphorus in front of magnificent Beylerbeyi Palace.

Aynur Ozge (VII ICHCA Congress President)

The European Headache and Migraine Trust International Congress 2008



Welcome Message

Welcome to the first European Headache and Migraine Trust International Congress 2008.

We are honoured to chair the first joint bi-annual congress of the Migraine Trust and the European Headache Federation. The European Headache and Migraine Trust International Congress (EHMTIC) 2008 is a united effort which reflects our wish to provide all participants with a unique opportunity to enjoy a 4 day programme covering new therapies, developments and research and our interest in the on-going education of both sufferers and professionals in the headache and migraine field. We will be delivering a joint programme of lectures which will provide a truly first class Congress.

We very much hope you will be able to join us at this meeting which will be taking place at the Novotel London West, Hotel and Convention Centre, London, UK; from Thursday 4 September to Sunday 7 September 2008.

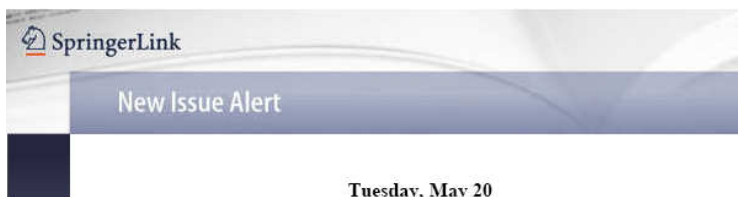
We look forward to welcoming you to our first joint congress in London in September 2008.

Prof. P.J. Goadsby
Prof H-C Diener
International Scientific Advisory Committee Joint Chairmen

Information:

E-MAIL: enquiries@ehmtcongress2008.com

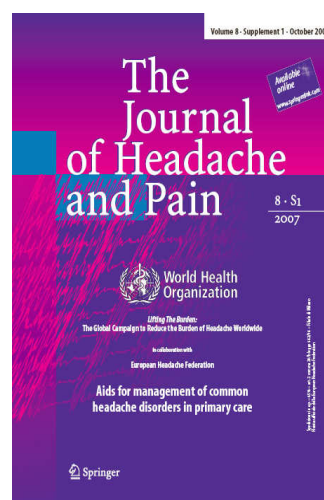
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The Journal of Headache and Pain

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We are pleased to deliver your requested table of contents alert for **The Journal of Headache and Pain**. Volume 9 Number 3 of **The Journal of Headache and Pain** is now available on the SpringerLink web site at <http://springerlink.com> by clicking on the URLs below you can access the abstracts for each article.

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Purpose: EHF Newsletter, a European Headache Federation publication, is dedicated to increasing physicians' awareness by educating and informing them as to what is going on in the field of headache in Europe.

This newsletter seeks to provide timely and accurate information from the most knowledgeable sources. The newsletter is mailed to EHF members, national drug companies and medical journals in line with information given by board members. The views expressed in the articles in EHF News are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the EHF and the Publisher.

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What's on...



23th-26th August 2008,
Madrid, Spain

12th Congress of the European Federation of Neurological Societies
Information:

<http://www.efns.org/efns2008>

4th-7th September 2008,
London, United Kingdom

European Headache and Migraine Trust
International Congress 2008
Information:

www.ehmtcongress2008.com

18th-20th September 2008,
Zürich, Switzerland

Neuroscience meets clinic. An update on headache and orofacial pain
European Academy of Craniomandibular Disorders (EACD)
Information:

www.eacmd.org

The Act when Mild (AwM) study: relevance of the early intake (continue from page 1)

moderate or severe.

In the almotriptan arms, the primary endpoint in the Act when Mild population showed that 53% of the mild/early group and 37.5% of the moderate/severe group were pain-free at two hours ($p = 0.02$). The corresponding proportions in the placebo groups were 24.7% and 17.5% (significantly lower than the respective almotriptan arms; $p \leq 0.01$). Expressing the duration of the migraine attack in terms of a Kaplan-Meier plot confirmed the overall lower burden of pain in the group of early intake when pain was of still mild intensity when compared with those of moderate-severe intensity. Secondary endpoints were also significant in favour of early intervention with almotriptan, both between and across treatment groups. This clinical trial confirmed the placebo-like tolerability profile of almotriptan.

The robust design of the AwM study provides positive results consistent with earlier studies with almotriptan 12.5 mg (4,5) and show that treatment with almotriptan 12.5 mg while pain is still mild and within 1 hour of migraine onset provides statistically significant and clinically relevant enhancement in efficacy compared with treatment taken when pain has reached higher severity levels.

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