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EHF NEWS

An e-newsletter from the European Headache Federation

Migraine-heterogeneity: current insights

Migraine is a chronic illness interspersed with acute signs and symptoms, which is currently defined in terms of "attacks" according to HIS criteria. However, this should not lead us to ignore a critical point emerging from the simple observation of patients, i.e. the variability of the combinations in which the disease manifests itself in the same individual and especially in different individuals.

This *heterogeneity* underpins both migraine "as attacks" (e.g. presence/absence of aura, different pain severity) and migraine "as a disease" (e.g. different onset, occurrence, association with other diseases, evolution, outcome). Genetic determinants are certainly at

the basis of some migraine forms, and the role of genetics is now increasing due to the 1988 criteria allowing a better phenotypical characterization. In most cases, however, migraine occurs as multifactorial inherited character: different genes or loci interact with factors intrinsic to the individual and/or with exogenous factors. The level of complexity is further increased by "modifying" genes (e.g. those encoding for dopamine receptors, NOS, ACE), by possible interactions between major genes, and by the preferential expression of the encoded proteins in given cells or systems. Another important aspect is migraine *comorbidity*, i.e. the non coincidental association with other neurological diseases, which may



reflect common neurobiological mechanisms, such as deranged brain oxidative metabolism, abnormal neuronal excitability due to altered membrane ion channels, or functional changes in receptors. In addition, the expression of comorbidity varies over time (*phenotypical heterochronia*): the clinical picture can remain unchanged over the years or become more complicated, sometimes leading to changes in migraine pattern (e.g. transformed migraine).

The clinical-descriptive approach allows only a partial understanding of migraine,

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The European Journal on Pain

The Journal of the European Federation of Chapters of the International Association for the Study of Pain (EFIC - www.EFIC.org)

The *European Journal of Pain* is a multidisciplinary international journal

that aims to become a global forum on all major aspects of pain and its management. The journal differs from existing pain journals in its clinical and educational emphasis. Submissions from all over the world are welcome.

Under the guidance of an international multi-disciplinary Editorial Board, the journal publishes articles on clinical and basic research relevant to many medical specialities. *European Journal of Pain* is covered by



Medline,
Index

Medicus, Science Citation Index, SciSearch, ISI Alerting Service, Neuroscience Citation Index and Chemical Abstracts.

www.harcourt-international.com/journals/eujp/

What's on...

◆ 26-30 June 2002, Istanbul, Turkey

6th Headache Congress
Information: www.6thehf.org

◆ 26-30 August 2002, Vilnius, Lithuania

EHF Summer School 2002
Information:
audroneja@hotmail.com

◆ 23-26 September 2002, London UK

14th Migraine Trust
Information: www.migrainetrust.org/research

Note

Abstract submission for
Istanbul is extended to
March 15th

6th European Headache
Federation Congress



26-30 June 2002 Istanbul - Turkey Main Themes

- Case Study based teaching course
- Challenging neurovascular headache syndromes
- Migraine and the Human Genome
- Neglected causes of head and facial pains
- Paediatric headache & Burden of headache

Information:
www.6thehf.org

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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 journalists 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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EHF Summer School 2002



26-30 August 2002 Vilnius - Lithuania Main Themes

- Acute and chronic primary headaches: pathophysiology, treatment guidelines
- Symptomatic headache and its treatment

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Thanks to an unrestricted educational grant from Pfizer, there will be a limited number of bursaries to Vilnius offering reduced-rate or free registrations for those who could not otherwise attend.

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the nature of which is more complex and heterogeneous than previously thought. Migraine can be depicted as an iceberg, and the part lying below the surface denotes aspects which are still largely unknown in depth.

We adopt the terms *complex disease* to define the nature of the illness, and *migraine complex* to describe the whole breadth of the clinical (overt) and subclinical (latent) aspects that it encompasses.

Attempts to revise migraine nosography and to identify more appropriate treatments will be facilitated by any novel approach wherein the study of genotype-environment interactions is considered of critical importance.

Alfredo Costa, Pavia (Italy)