**Lifting The Burden**

**Web Site** www.l-t-b.org

The Global Campaign against Headache

**What is It?**
The Global Campaign against Headache is a worldwide partnership. First and foremost, it is a collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), with which Lifting The Burden is in Official Relations. Lifting The Burden believes that, through formal partnership with WHO, harnessing WHO’s experience, know-how, contacts and resources, it can open doors, address problems and propose and test potential solutions in parts of the world that cannot otherwise be reached. The Global Campaign is also a partnership with international nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions and many willing individuals around the world. Through these many partnerships, the Global Campaign endeavours to find practical local solutions to a global public-health problem.

**Purpose**
The Global Campaign’s essential purpose is to bring better health care to people with headache, thereby reducing the burden of headache worldwide.

**The Problem Summarized**
Headache disorders are real and often lifelong illnesses. They are very common, affecting men, women and children in every part of the world. What is more, they are disabling. In the World Health Report 2001 [reference 1], the World Health Organization ranked migraine among the top 20 causes in the world of years of healthy life lost to disability. Migraine is the cause of an estimated 400,000 lost days from work or school every year per million of the population in developed countries. Migraine harms family and social relationships and damages quality of life. Migraine, however, is only one of several headache disorders with public-health importance. The others include tension-type headache and a group of disorders, including medication-overuse headache, that are characterized by headache occurring on more days than not (sometimes without remission). Together, these are believed to be responsible for even more disability than migraine [reference 2]. If this is so, headache disorders collectively are in the top ten causes of disability worldwide, and the top five in women. That is one side of the problem. A second is that, although good health care can greatly reduce this burden, it still persists everywhere. In some places it is not lessened at all. The principal reason is that health-care systems, which should provide this care, simply do not reach many who need it. This abject health-care failure has its roots in education failure at every level, and in the resulting and widespread lack of understanding. A third side of the problem is perspective. Research into disease mechanisms is unquestionably important if they are to be understood and new and more effective treatments made available. Yet we know that the discoveries of the last 15 years - so exciting in the developed world - do not touch a large majority of the world’s headache-blighted lives. This is why headache matters as a public-health imperative.

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Headache disorders are among the most common disorders of the nervous system, causing substantial ill-health and disability in populations throughout the world. Despite this, they are underestimated in scope and scale, and there is little recognition of their public health impact. It is not known how, or how effectively, healthcare and other resources are utilized to mitigate their effects. Who has a number of important initiatives in the field of clinical neuroscience designed to promote international collaboration, enhance research capacity and, above all, develop programmes to benefit communities worldwide affected by neurological disorders. Among them is Project Atlas, a series of publications now including the Atlas of Headache Disorders, the result of a collaborative study by WHO and the nongovernmental organization, Lifting The Burden: the Global campaign against headache. The Global campaign involves multiple nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions and individuals worldwide, with objectives not only of better professional, public and political awareness of the global burden of headache but also of solutions to it. It might appear that production of an atlas would be difficult in relation to headache disorders, but this publication, carefully and expertly designed and covering, as it does, very important causes of population ill-health and disability, is highly appropriate and timely. Its introduction provides a clear description of its purpose, definitions and descriptions of the principal headache disorders and an account of barriers to care that must be overcome if these are to be managed effectively. The results, gathered from respondents from more than half the world’s countries, are set out in themes: epidemiology, the impact of headache disorders on society, health-care utilization, diagnosis, assessment and treatment, professional training and the importance of national professional organizations are all given full consideration. The key messages derived from this project can be expected to have major influence upon the recognition and management of headache disorders across the world. This publication is likely to be widely read; it is an important resource for doctors and others interested in headache disorders or concerned with their management, especially policy-makers.

Lord Walton of Detchant,
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Former President, World Federation of Neurology
Crossbench Life Peer, UK House of Lords
The Global Campaign is a response to these global failures. Its vision is that of a future world in which headache disorders are recognized everywhere as real, disabling and deserving of medical care. In this future world, all who need headache care have access to it, without artificial barriers. The **first objective** is to know the size and nature of the headache problem in all regions of the world (“knowledge for action”). This can be achieved in two major steps: by bringing together all of the published worldwide evidence of the burden attributable to headache, and by setting up new studies where the available evidence is lacking or of poor quality. It is perhaps extraordinary that, in 2004, very little was known of the prevalence or burden of any headache disorder for more than half the people of the world: those living in most of the Western Pacific including China, all of South East Asia including India, all of Eastern Europe including Russia, most of Eastern Mediterranean and most of Africa. The Campaign will use this knowledge, as it is gathered, to achieve its **second objective**. This is to persuade governments and other health-service policy-makers, health-care providers, people directly affected by headache and the general population that, on clear evidence, headache must have higher health-care priority (“awareness for action”). *Lifting The Burden* believes that the basis of the health-care solution for headache in most parts of the world is education. The **third objective**, and the ultimate purpose of the Global Campaign, is to work with local policy-makers and principal stakeholders to plan and implement health-care services for headache, ensuring these are appropriate to local systems, resources and needs.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Global Campaign is to reduce the burden of headache worldwide, achieving this by working with local policy-makers and principal stakeholders to plan and implement health-care services for headache, ensuring these are appropriate to local systems, resources and needs.
What’s on..

Panorama of national and International congresses and courses where Headache is an issue

28-31 May 2011
Lisbon, Portugal
Twenty-first Meeting of the European Neurological Society (ENS)

23-26 June 2011
Berlin, Germany
15th Congress of the International Headache Society (IHS)

10-13 September 2011
Budapest, Hungary
15th Congress of the European Federation of Neurological Societies (EFNS)

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EHF News

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