Updates in the management of cluster headache

Farhad Assarzadegan, MD,

Associate Professor of Neurology, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences (SBUMS)



Cluster headache, a primary headache disorder, consists of short (15-180 minutes), frequent (up to eight a day), unilateral attacks of facial pain with associated ipsilateral autonomic features and restlessness. The attacks are suspected to be one of the most painful human experiences, and the disorder is associated with a high rate of suicidal ideation. Proper diagnosis is key, as some of the most effective treatments, such as high flow oxygen gas, are rarely used in other headache disorders. Yet diagnostic delay is typically years for this disorder, as it is often confused with migraine and trigeminal neuralgia, and secondary causes may be overlooked. This review covers the clinical, pathophysiologic, and therapeutic features of cluster headache. Recent updates in diagnosis include the redefinition of chronic cluster headache (remission periods lasting less than three months instead of the previous one month), and recent advances in management include new treatments for episodic cluster headache (galcanezumab and non-invasive vagus nerve stimulation).

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