

Update on medication overuse headache

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The frequent and regular intake of drugs to treat acute headache episodes, migraine attacks in patients with primary headache disorders, can result in an increase in headache frequency and finally lead to chronic headache. This condition is called medication overuse headache (MOH) by the classification of the International Headache Society (ICHD3). In Europe, the prevalence of MOH in the general population is around 1–2% , with a preponderance in women (up to 93%). Migraine is the underlying primary headache disorder in 80% of patients with MOH . Most of the remaining patients have tension-type headache or, more rarely, post-traumatic headache , new daily persistent headache or other secondary headaches. Triptans, simple analgesics, combination analgesics and opioids are the drugs most commonly associated with MOH. Importantly, patients with episodic headache may develop MOH if they use pain medication for other causes such as arthritis. The most important questions should be answered in treatment of MOH are the role of information and education for the prevention of MOH, pharmacological preventive therapy effectiveness in the prevention of MOH, education and counselling effectiveness in the treatment of MOH, preventive medical and non-medical treatment effectiveness in MOH, withdrawal from overused medication(s) effectiveness in MOH, treatment of the symptoms that subjects with MOH develop during medication withdrawal and finally prevention of relapse after successful treatment of MOH.

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