

Prevalence of tension-type headache and migraine among the employees of the Swiss University hospital, their impact on disability, headache management and economic impact for the employer

Objectives of this cross-sectional, observational study were to measure the prevalence of tension-type headache (TTH) and migraine among the employees of the large Swiss University hospital, to assess the migraine management (particularly the exposure to triptans), to measure the headache- and migraine-related disability by measuring the quality of life, and to make an estimation of economic implications by measuring the indirect costs of the disease.

Patients and methods: A self-completed questionnaire was sent to 2000 randomly chosen employees of the University hospital.

Results: 1210 employees (60.5%) responded, but only 397 men and 795 women provided information on age and gender. Of the 1192 employees who provided sufficiently complete information, 723 (61%) reported having had at least one headache in the three months before completing the questionnaire. The classification of the main type of headaches, using the IHS criteria, showed that 217 (18%) of the 1192 respondents had a migraine headache, 438 (37%) had TTH, and 68 (6%) other type. Regarding the occupational groups, the health care-staff suffered more headache ($p=0.031$) than other employees, irrespective of the type of headache and gender. Of the 690 who suffered from any type of headache, 221 (32%) did not take any, 305 (44%) consumed OTC preparations and 164 (24%) prescription drugs. The economic consequences of productivity loss may equal approximately 1.3 million CHF, representing 0.3% of the overall annual personnel expenditure of the hospital.

Conclusion: TTH and migraine are highly prevalent conditions among University hospital employees, with significant impact on the society.