

Migraine...and more

by being physically sick and seeking medical assistance. You can be of great help, especially if you don't try to rid them of their symptoms.

Finally, headache patients who are schizophrenic are likely to benefit from an antipsychotic agent such as haloperidol (Haldol) or a phenothiazine such as chlorpromazine (Chlor-PZ, Promachel, Promapar, Sonazine, Thorazine). Consider hospitalization only for those who are likely to benefit from such treatment or who can't adjust outside such a setting.

SILLER: Underlying depression is by far the most common cause of frequent, recurring headaches of all sorts. For this reason, the tricyclics are among the most valuable treatments.

Toxic vascular headache

CUTLER: Now, there's still another kind of headache besides the migraine, cluster, and tension types—the toxic vascular headache. I lump it with functional headaches, as it's not usually associated with organic brain disease.

SILLER: The common denominator is intracranial vasodilatation. Anything that dilates the large vessels at the base of the brain—for example, exercise, febrile illnesses, or drinking too much alcohol—can cause vascular headache, sometimes as severe as migraine headache. (Not all morning-after headaches are the result of intracranial vasodilatation, however; some may be due to depression about having made a fool of oneself the night before.) Hypoglycemia and hypoxia also threaten the integrity of the brain and cause vasodilatation. The challenge lies in finding out why the patient became hypoglycemic or hypoxic—not simply in determining that headache results from one of these conditions. Of course, headaches due to encephalitis or menin-

Beware of drug abuse

Headache patients—perhaps more than any others—abuse analgesics. When they have frequent recurrences, they tend to take larger quantities of drugs that have serious side effects.

For instance, methysergide maleate (Sansert) may cause fibrosis, while certain analgesics in large doses over a long period may cause renal damage. Aspirin causes GI bleeding. Ergot compounds provoke ergotism and may precipitate or worsen angina and peripheral vascular disease.

Of course, narcotics are to be avoided because it's so easy for a patient with chronic headache to get hooked on meperidine HCl (Demerol) or morphine sulfate. A physician should be especially cautious with patients who say their headaches are never relieved by anything but a shot of morphine.

Cutler

Headaches:

Additional prescribing information

For more information on therapeutic agents discussed in this article, see Physicians' Desk Reference, 1976 edition.

Amitriptyline HCl Elavil (Merck Sharp & Dohme)	PDR page 1070	Hydralazine HCl Apresoline (Ciba)	700
Belladonna alkaloids, phenobarbital, and ergotamine tartrate Bellergal (Dorsey)	764	Imipramine HCl Imavate (Robins) Janimine (Abbott) Presamine (USV Pharmaceutical) SK-Pharmine (Smith Kline & French) Tofranil (Geigy)	1263 523 1557 1448 827
Chlordiazepoxide HCl Librium (Roche)	1290	Indomethacin Indocin (Merck Sharp & Dohme)	1074
Chlorpromazine Chlor-PZ (USV Pharmaceutical) Thorazine (Smith Kline & French)	1548 1457	Isocarboxazid Marplan (Roche)	1292
Cyproheptadine HCl Periactin (Marck Sharp & Dohme)	1080	Isometheptene HCl Octin (Knoll)	858
Diazepam Valium (Roche)	1307	Isometheptene mucate Octin (Knoll)	858
Dihydroergotamine mesylate D.H.E. 45 (Sandoz)	1344	Isometheptene mucate, dichloralphenazone, and acetaminophen Migrin (Carnrick)	633
Ergotamine tartrate Ergomar (Fisons) Gynergen (Sandoz)	805 1345	Meperidine HCl Demerol (Winthrop)	1654
Ergotamine tartrate and caffeine Caférgot (Sandoz)	1342	Methysergide maleate Sansert (Sandoz)	1349
Ergotamine tartrate, cytolizine HCl, and caffeine Migral (Burroughs Wellcome)	679	Nitroglycerin, sublingual Nitrostat (Parke-Davis)	1168
Haloperidol Haldol (McNeil)	1011	Phenelzine sulfate Nardil (Warner Chilcott)	1628
		Propranolol HCl Inderal (Ayerst)	591
		Tranylcypromine sulfate Parnate (Smith Kline & French)	1438