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ABSTRACT

Migraines are severe, recurring, and painful headaches. They can be preceded or accompanied by sensory warning signs and other symptoms. The extreme pain that migraines cause can last for hours or even days. Migraines can follow an aura of sensory disturbances followed by a severe headache that often appears on one side of the head. They tend to affect people aged 15 to 55 years.

Ardhvbhedak (Migrain)

The disease of the head in which a violent and excruciating pain of a piercing or aching nature is felt in one half of the cranium which makes the patient feel giddy, and which either follows no distinct periodicity or recurs at a regular interval of 10 days or of a fortnight, is called the Ardhvbhedak and is due to the concerted action of the three doshas. (Vata pitta kapha).

Fast facts on migraine

Some people who experience migraines can clearly identify triggers or factors that cause the headaches, such as allergies, light, and stress.

Some people get a warning symptom before the start of the migraine headache.

Many people with migraine can prevent a full-blown attack by recognizing and acting upon the warning signs.

Over-the-counter (OTC) medications can eliminate or reduce pain, and specific medications can help some people with migraine.

People who have severe attacks can take preventive medicines.

Triggers

The cause of migraines is not yet known.

It is suspected that they result from abnormal activity in the brain. This can affect the way nerves communicate as well as the chemicals and blood vessels in the brain. Genetics may make someone more sensitive to the triggers that can cause migraines.

However, the following triggers are likely to set off migraines

Hormonal changes: Women may experience migraine symptoms during menstruation, due to changing hormone levels.

Emotional triggers: Stress, depression, anxiety, excitement, and shock can trigger a migraine.

Physical causes: Tiredness and insufficient sleep, shoulder or neck tension, poor posture, and physical overexertion have all been linked to migraines. Low blood sugar and jet lag can also act as triggers.

Triggers in the diet: Alcohol and caffeine can contribute to triggering migraines. Some specific foods can also have this effect, including chocolate, cheese, citrus fruits, and foods containing the additive tyramine. Irregular mealtimes and dehydration have also been named as potential triggers.

Medications: Some sleeping pills, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) medications, and the combined contraceptive pill have all been named as possible triggers.

Triggers in the environment: Flickering screens, strong smells, second-hand smoke, and loud noises can set off a migraine. Stuffy rooms, temperature changes, and bright lights are also possible triggers.

Symptoms

Migraine symptoms can vary greatly from person to person. The severity of migraine symptoms can also vary tremendously.

Head pain, which is typically throbbing in nature and occurs on one side of the head, is the most common migraine symptom. A majority of people with migraine will also experience nausea, sensitivity to light, and

sensitivity to sound. Many people experience visual disturbances, dizziness, fatigue, numbness or tingling during their attacks. Some symptoms can seem unrelated to migraines, so keeping a journal can help identify migraine-related symptoms.

Migraines often progress through four stages, with symptoms varying from stage to stage. Possible symptoms during prodrome include aphasia (difficulty speaking), constipation or diarrhea, difficulty concentrating, fatigue, hyperactivity, food cravings, increased urination, mood changes, and neck pain. You can read this article on migraine prodrome for more information.

The aura phase of migraine can include a variety of symptoms including allodynia (hypersensitivity to touch/feel), aphasia (difficulty with language), auditory or olfactory hallucinations (hearing or smelling things that are not there), one-sided paralysis, dizziness, vertigo, and parasthesia. Learn more about migraine aura here: the migraine aura phase & migraine aura symptoms.

People are usually most familiar with the headache phase of migraine. Head pain during a migraine attack is frequently unilateral, meaning it occurs on one side of the head. Pain is typically pulsating or throbbing in nature, made worse by physical activity, and lasts for four or more hours. Other symptoms can also accompany the headache phase of migraine.

Postdrome, the last phase of migraine, can lead to feeling “hungover” including symptoms such as fatigue, changes in mood, and inability to concentration.

Types

There are two main types of migraine. This classification depends on whether the individual experiences any disturbances of the senses leading up to a migraine. These are known as auras.

Migraine with aura

For many people with migraine, the auras act as a warning, telling them that a headache is soon to come. The effects of an aura can include:

- Confusing thoughts or experiences the perception of strange, sparkling or flashing lights
- Zig-zagging lines in the visual field blind spots or blank patches in the vision.
- Pins and needles in an arm or leg.
- Difficulty speaking
- Stiffness in the shoulders, neck, or limbs
- Unpleasant smells

If the following symptoms are unusual for the person with migraine, they should not be ignored

- An unusually severe headache visual disturbance.
- Loss of sensation.
- Difficulties with speech

When migraines with aura affect vision, the patient may see things that are not there, such as transparent strings of objects. They may also not see parts of the object in front of them or even feel as if part of their field of vision appears, disappears, and then comes back again.

People experiencing an aura may describe the visual disturbance as similar to the sensation that follows being exposed to a very bright camera flash.

Migraine without aura

More commonly, a person will experience a migraine without any sensory disturbance leading up to the attack. Between 70 and 90 percent of migraines occur without an aura.

Other types

There are other types of migraine related to specific syndromes or triggers, including:

1. **Chronic migraine:** This refers to any migraine that triggers attacks on over 15 days of the month.
2. **Menstrual migraine:** This is when the attacks occur in a pattern connected to the menstrual cycle.
3. **Hemiplegic migraine:** This causes weakness on one side of the body for a temporary period.
4. **Abdominal migraine:** This is a syndrome that connects migraine attacks to irregular function in the gut and abdomen. It mainly occurs in children under 14 years of age.
5. **Migraine with brainstem aura:** This is a rare type of migraine that can trigger severe neurological symptoms, such as affected speech.

Speak to a doctor after identifying a migraine pattern in any headaches experienced. They will be able to advise the type and prescribe suitable treatment.

Diagnoses of migraine

Doctors have a range of criteria and tests for diagnosing migraine. Migraine diagnosis typically centers around a description of the different migraine symptoms, how long they occur and how long they last. This will help your migraine specialist determine what tests are necessary to rule out other causes for your symptoms.

Some tests that can be conducted include

MRIs, Magnetic resonance imaging, CT/Cat SCANS, Computed Tomography, Blood Chemistry and Urine analysis, Sinus X-Ray, EEG, Eye Exam, Spinal Tap or lumbar puncture.

Treatment

There is currently no single cure for migraines. Treatment is aimed at preventing a full-blown attack, and alleviating the symptoms that occur.

Lifestyle alterations that might help reduce the frequency of migraines include

1. Getting enough sleep, reducing stress, drinking plenty of water, avoiding certain foods, regular physical exercise.

2. Some people also find that special diets can help, such as gluten-free.
3. Consider seeking further treatment if the above changes do not relieve the symptoms or frequency of migraines. The treatment of migraine symptoms focuses on avoiding triggers, controlling symptoms, and taking medicine.

Preventive medications

Migraine prevention begins with avoiding triggers. The main goals of preventive therapies are to reduce the frequency, pain level, and duration of migraine headaches and increase the effectiveness of other therapies.

There are several medications and supplements that help prevent migraine attacks, including:-

Antidepressants, coenzyme Q10, herbal extracts, such as feverfew, magnesium citrate, vitamin B-12 supplements, riboflavin.

It is worth noting that some people can experience a medication overuse headache (MOH), or rebound headache. This can occur after taking too many medications in an attempt to prevent migraine attacks.

Medications

Migraines are often managed through a course of medication. There are many different types of migraine medication, including painkillers.

Painkillers should be taken early in the progress of a migraine rather than allowing the headache to develop like- Naproxen, ibuprofen, acetaminophen.

Other painkillers, such as aspirin with caffeine and acetaminophen, can often stop the headache or reduce pain.

Treatment of migraine through ayurveda

Nasya- Soothing nose drops (Nasya): Putting about 5 drops of brahmi ghee in each nostril can alleviate the pain of migraine headache. In vata-type headaches, placing 3-5 drops of warm ghee in each nostril can help to calm down the headache.

Nasya dravya Lipid soluble substances has greater affinity for passive absorption Diffuse through plasma membrane of nasal mucosa Olfactory receptor cells Olfactory nerve Olfactory bulb Olfactory tract Shringataka marma (main vital point situated on the surface of the brain corresponding to the nerve centers) Nasya dravya stimulates the nerve endings Impulses are transmitted to the CNS This results in scraping of morbid doshas of head and extracts them out Normalises the tridoshas Diminishes the pain.

Yoga for headaches

Since stress is an important factor in creating both migraine and tension headaches, yoga can without doubt

help in preventing these types of headaches. Yoga can also help with tension in the muscles of the neck, back and head which contribute to headaches. Yoga helps to release tight muscles and improve blood circulation in that region. Yoga helps relax the mind as well. Rodney Yee recommends a sequence of practices and instructions as follows: Legs-up-the-wall pose (Viparita karani) for five minutes or longer, supported cobbler's pose, half plow pose (Ardha Halasana), one-legged forward bend (Janu Sirasasana) with head support, seated forward bend (Paschimottanasana) with head support.

Pranayama (breathing exercises)

Different types of breathing exercises have different effects on the body, mind and spirit. Breathing practices purify nadis (subtle channels that carry prana through the field of mind). If the headache is due to vata vitiation, one can benefit from alternate nostril breathing (Anuloma Viloma). If the headache is due to pitta vitiation, doing lunar and shitali pranayama can help and if due to kapha dosha vitiation, solar and kapalabhati pranayama can be beneficial.

Medicine

1. Saptamrat lauha guggal
2. shirahshula vajra rasa
3. saraswataristha
4. Aarogya vardgani vati

CONCLUSION

Migraine is a disabling disease. Migraineurs are usually prescribed multiple preventive and acute therapy medications to deal with recurrent headaches. Migraine sufferers are seeking alternative (nonpharmacologic) therapies to alleviate migraine headaches. The healing science of Ayurveda opens new doors for treatment of migraine and other type of headaches. Ayurvedic treatments are holistic therapies that are tailored to the individual since according to Ayurvedic medicine, everyone is a unique combination of five elements and three life source energies (vata, pitta, kapha). Ayurveda uses different modalities such as nutrition, lifestyle modifications, herbs, panchakarma, yoga, meditation, relaxation techniques, pranayama (breathing exercises), aromatherapy, marma points, color therapy and gem therapy to help treat migraine headaches. These treatment approaches create a balanced physiology. This state of complete balance in healing the body and mind can allow the illness to resolve and symptoms to disappear.

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