A Study on Headache Disorder in Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia Review (October 2013)

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***Abstract* - Headache is the most common central nervous system disorders & one of commonest health problem (1). It has psychological, social & economic effect on the patients & their surrounding populations. Although many epidemiological studies about headache disorders are performed yearly; they are only partially documented. Those studies are performed mainly in the developed countries & only few numbers of studies was performed in the developing countries because of the limited resources & funding and the present of difficult to be reached cites or villages.**

Objectives

The aim of our study is to define the problem of headache worldwide & to compare the world wide studies & experiences with studies published in Arabian Gulf countries & Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA); to gain better understanding of the burden of headache & situation of headache care in our country; if it is satisfying the patient and if the health resources are well utilized to decrease their suffering. Worldwide experience should be used to put helpful solutions & to make the management of headache disorders in our country more effective & efficient.

Methods

Review of most relevant worldwide studies related to international headache epidemiology including Arabian Gulf countries & burden of headache worldwide. We searched studies published on PubMed & Google scholar for the most relevant & updated studies. An electronic survey that was performed will be discussed to, those surveys were spread through social websites to get some ideas about general populations & physicians opinions on recent status of headache care provided to headache patients & the idea of initiating a specialized headache clinic in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Results

In KSA; prevalence of headache was measured through small number of studies; 1-year prevalence of all headache was 63% & it is accounted for 13% of all neurological outpatients. More than one-third of school students were absent from school due to headache. Mean headache-attributed lost work-days per person/year was 24.0 days for migraine, 6.6 days for Tension type headache (TTH) & 53.4 days for medication overuse headache . The results of our 3 questionnaires show that; almost half of our samples have monthly attacks of headache & around 10-15% have daily headache attacks. More than one third of the responders mentioned that headache prevent them from performing their daily activity , it causes social isolation in more than 20 % of them , in almost equal percentage it is affect their relations & it is affect the school or work attendance in 8.33- 9.3% of them. Almost all of our responders agree that there is a need for more organization in management of headache cases & more education for headache patients in KSA.

Conclusion

Epidemiological studies worldwide show that headache has a high prevalence & burden; most of the developed country initiate headache organizations, programs that is aiming for physician educations & specialized headache clinic. Studies in KSA show that headache is affecting people life & most of the patients do not know where to go to manage their headaches. More organized headache care is needed & a Saudi headache society should be built to perform more studies & provide optimal care for headache patients.

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