Primary Headache in Children Aged Between 6 and 18 Years—Causes and Associated Factors

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To the Editor: Headache is a common problem in children and adolescents and is a major cause of school absenteeism and impairment in quality of life [1]. Lack of appropriate management of primary headache in children exists [2]. Knowledge about prevalence of primary headache and its subtypes is essential in executing appropriate level of care. This study was done in a tertiary care university hospital to describe the causes and associated factors of primary headache in children aged between 6 and 18 y.

Children in the age group of 6 to 18 y, with diagnosis of primary headache as per the International Classification of Headache Disorders (ICHD), were included in the study. Clinical details, headache characteristics, and associated factors were noted. Pain severity was assessed using Wong–Baker "faces" rating scale. Characteristics and associated factors were compared between the subtypes of primary headache.

A total of 251 children (males, $n = 111$, 44.2%) with primary headache presented during the study period; 136 (54.2%) children had migraine and 115 (45.8%) children had tension-type headache (TTH). Children with migraine in comparison with TTH were younger in age (10.52 ± 2.84 vs. 14.50 ± 2.12 , $p < 0.001$). This finding is in contrast with previous studies [3]. This difference may be due to different psychosocial environment of the study population. Children with migraine in comparison with TTH had increased need of drug for headache relief (100% vs. 71.3%, $p < 0.001$) and increased frequency of self-medication (72.8% vs. 54.8%,

$p < 0.001$). This finding has been reported previously [4]. This may be due to monthly episodes of migraine, which are prolonged and severe, which is observed in our study also. Identification of these children and instituting appropriate care is important in terms of preventing morbidity.

This was a hospital based study, which may not truly reflect the status in general population. Large scale studies need to be done at population level.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest None.

References

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