

Frequency and risk factors for Headache disability: a population based cross-sectional study in Egypt

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Background: A headache is a very common condition that can have a significant impact on one's quality of life. It is one of the leading causes of years lived with disability worldwide. The objective of the study was to determine the prevalence of primary headache disability, its characteristics, risk factors and its impact on daily life.

Materials and methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in Fayoum governorate. The sample size was 1909 participants. A multistage random sample technique was used to select adults aged above 18 years. A self-structured questionnaire solicited information on sociodemographic characteristics, headache characteristics, and the headache disability index. SPSS v 22.0 was used for data analysis.

Results: Headaches caused complete disability in 19.5% of the study group, and 76.8% developed severe disability. Participants who reported that they had a headache more than once a week were; 44.5% had moderate pain and 40.2% had more intense pain. About 55% complained of attacks rather than continuous headache and were more likely to have a degree of complete disability, (P = 0.001). A statistically significant association was found between living in urban areas, working in professional occupations, complaining of severe headache in the form of an attack and seeking medical advice, with high scores of headache disability.

Conclusion: Headache is a condition that affects the entire population in a way that causes high levels of disability. Good management is necessary for the reduction of the adverse effects of headaches on the health of the population. This should focus on raising public awareness by means of education and on the provision of basic healthcare.

Keywords: Disability, headache, headache disability index, pain

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