

Prevalence of primary headache disorders in Fayoum Governorate, Egypt

Background: There is abundance of epidemiological studies of headache in developed and western countries; however, data in developing countries and in Egypt are still lacking. This study aims to detect the prevalence of primary headache disorders in both urban and rural sectors in Fayoum governorate, Egypt. **Methods:** A total of 2600 subjects were included using multi-stage stratified systematic random sampling, with respondent rate of 91.3 %. A pre-designed Arabic version, interviewer-administered, pilot tested structured questionnaire was developed according to The International Classification of Headache Disorders, 3rd edition (beta version), and this questionnaire was validated and the strength of agreement in headache diagnosis was good. **Results:** The 1-year headache prevalence was 51.4 %, which was more prevalent in urban dwellers. The most common primary headache type was episodic tension type headache (prevalence; 24.5 %), followed by episodic migraine (prevalence; 17.3 %), both types peaked in midlife. Headache disorders were more common in females with exception of cluster headache that showed the expected male dominance. The risk of chronic headache increased more than one fold and half when the participants were females, married, and in those with high education. More than 60 % of our participants did not seek medical advice for their headaches problem; this percentage was higher in rural areas. **Conclusions:** Primary headache disorders are common in Egypt; prevalence rate was comparable with western countries with exception of episodic tension headache. Still headache is under-estimated and under-recognized in Egypt and this problem should be targeted by health care providers.

Keywords: Primary headache; Prevalence; Migraine; Egypt