



7.0 Headaches

Introduction

Headaches can be categorised into two types

Primary Headaches where the headaches are the pathology. ^(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

These include migraines, cluster headaches, tension headaches, chronic daily headaches. ^(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

Secondary Headaches where the headaches are due to an underlying medical condition. ^(3, 5, 6)

These include tumours, vascular lesions, sinusitis, viral infections etc. ^(3, 5, 6)

Important features on history

1. Time course of the headache and temporal pattern of headache ^(1, 3, 7)
 - a. How long has it been present?
 - b. How frequent/severe are the headaches?
 - c. Is the headache increasing in severity?
 - d. Is the headache increasing in frequency?
2. Exacerbating and relieving factors ^(1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
3. Burden of disease ^(1, 4, 6, 8)
 - a. Is the child missing school?
 - b. Is the headache affecting sleep?
 - c. Has appetite been affected?
 - d. What is the degree of disability?

Other things to consider (i.e. your red flags) ^(3, 5, 7)

- Children < 3 years
- Early morning headaches/waking with headaches
- Early morning vomiting
- Explosive onset
- Short history/first/worst headache ever
- Accelerated course/change in character of headache

- Steadily worsening headache
- Personality changes
- Weakness/clumsiness/other new neurological symptoms
- Seizures
- Presence of neurocutaneous lesions
- Known underlying medical disorder (malignancy/neurofibromatosis/bleeding disorder etc)


Pre-referral investigations

Nil ^(3, 5, 7)

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