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Neuropsychological effects of migraine

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Migraine affects about 12% of individuals in the general population, it can occur at all ages with a peak in the age group between 25 and 40, corresponding to the maximum productivity period. The Global Burden of Diseases ranks migraine among the ten most disabling neurological diseases in the world population and in first place as a cause of disability under the age of 50. There is strong literature evidence that migraine is positively correlated with the onset of various psychiatric disorders, mainly including: personality disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder. The degree of disability and the direct and indirect migraine-related costs increase with the frequency of attacks and in relation to psychiatric comorbidity. Furthermore, psychiatric comorbidity is considered among the risk factors for chronic migraine, which can be modified, if the psychiatric disorder is early diagnosed and adequately treated. Migraine is associated with psychiatric comorbidity with a so high frequency that it is unlikely that their link is due to chance. Numerous theories explain this association involving a possible common neurotransmitter dysfunction. Primary headache is an increasing phenomenon also in pediatric age and, very often, it provokes disabling limitations in children's daily activities, neuropsychological effects and it negatively affects family well-being. Therefore, migraine, such as other chronic diseases, is able to provoke neuropsychological consequences not only in the affected individual, but also in his family. Contrasting data are present in literature about the impacts of children's migraine on parental experienced stress. We assessed, through a battery of tests, a large group of parents of children with migraine without aura. The preliminary results of our study show a significantly higher rate of stress in parents of children with migraine without aura and a statistically significant correlation between the parental stress total and the intensity and frequency of migraine attacks. These results highlight the need for an extensive intervention in the clinical management of pediatric migraine, which has also to consider a holistic view of the family.

Biography

Luigi Vetri is a physician and researcher at Department of Sciences for Health Promotion and Mother and Child Care "G. D'Alessandro," at University of Palermo. He has been collaborating for two years with Oasi Research Institute-IRCCS in Troina in the field of congenital and inborn causes of intellectual disabilities and neurodevelopmental disorders.

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