

MEETING ABSTRACT

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# EHMTI-0035. "Cervical pain" study in an Italian tertiary referral headache center

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## Introduction

The majority of migraine patients remain undiagnosed or misdiagnosed in Italy (Cevoli et al. 2009). In our experience, many patients affected by migraine self-diagnose it as 'cervical pain syndrome' (CP) assuming cervical spine pathology as the cause.

## Aim

To phenotype and classify, in a tertiary referral headache center, the headache types of patients with self-diagnosed CP, and to describe this sample of patients.

## Methods

All patients aged 18 to 75yo, referred to Mondino Headache Center for a first visit for headache, completed a questionnaire about CP. A detailed history was taken and a neurological exam was performed in each patient. Brain and cervical imaging were performed when deemed necessary. All patients finally received a diagnosis based on ICHD-III $\beta$  criteria.

## Result

85 patients completed the questionnaire: 47 were suffering from self-diagnosed CP, 3 had suffered from self-diagnosed CP, 35 never had self-diagnosed CP. In all of 50 CP descriptions, the pain involved the head. ICHD-III $\beta$  diagnoses included migraine without aura (n = 30), migraine with aura (1), probable migraine without aura (n = 4), chronic migraine (n = 7), medication overuse headache/chronic migraine (n = 5), tension type headache (n = 2), hemicrania continua (n = 1), no patient presented with a phenotype suggestive of cervicogenic headache. 24 out of 50 patients with CP answered the question 'who did tell you that these attacks are CP?' with: general practitioner/medical specialist. The majority

of these patients underwent exams without a clear indication and ineffective treatment.

## Conclusion

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that systemically assessed the headache phenotype of patients with self-diagnosed CP. The results suggest that the phenomenon of self-diagnosing CP is very common in Italy, even in patients referred to a tertiary headache center. The majority of these patients suffer from typical migraine attacks, without any evidence of pathological conditions of the cervical spine.

No conflict of interest.

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