

'A Snapshot of the Impact of Migraine on Australians'
Headache Australia and Allergan Survey – August 2011
Summary of Key Findings

Chronic Migraine patients have headaches for an average of 15 days or more per month, with a migraine on at least 8 of these days.

The findings of the Headache Australia and Allergan Survey highlight the impact of headache and migraine – whether it be episodic (occasional) or chronic (frequent) – on sufferers.

Symptoms

- Respondents reported that the most common symptoms experienced with migraine are severe headaches (77 per cent), stiffness in the neck and shoulders (51 per cent) and/or nausea (38 per cent).
- 88 per cent of respondents surveyed said their headaches last for over 4 hours, with 58 per cent saying that it takes more than 24 hours to feel normal again.
- 20 per cent of respondents experience migraines on more than 9 days per month.
- Half of the respondents suffering from migraine didn't know or were not sure of the difference between episodic and chronic migraine.

Impact on daily living

- 94 per cent of migraine sufferers say that migraine has prevented them from going to work, with 83 per cent having to miss going to work more than a few times a year.
- Three out of four (75 per cent) of migraine sufferers have been unable to attend an important family event (such as a wedding, baptism, birthday party) due to migraine.
- 21 per cent say that migraine has prevented them from taking on a full time job.

Impact on family

- Over half of the respondents said that their migraines had prevented them from playing or cooking for their children.

State of mind

- When suffering from a migraine 51 per cent of respondents said they feel like little or nothing can help them, 39 per cent feel depressed and around 1 in 3 feel completely disabled (e.g. can't speak or move). Three out of five (61 per cent) said the pain is 'agonising and unbearable'.

The unprompted responses below give a snapshot into the state of mind of migraine sufferers during a migraine episode.

"Helpless, distorted, annoyed, over it, sick of the lack of help from doctors, annoyed at people who want to speak to me, emotional."

"Guilty and stressed."

"Like my body is no longer mine."

"Frightened due to visual loss."

"I feel such guilt for not being able to cope, taking time off work."

"Impacts on my family directly as I need constant care etc due to mobility issues. I feel like I am a burden on them."

"My family suffers as they can only watch."

"Migraine should be classed as a disability."

- ENDS -

Notes to editor:

- In August 2011, Headache Australia and Allergan conducted a survey of people registered on the National Headache Register. People visiting the Headache Australia website also had the opportunity to participate. There were 435 respondents.
- Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

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