

Facts and Figures about Migraine

This fact sheet gives you some key facts and figures about migraine.

Migraine is the most common neurological condition in the developed world. It is more prevalent than diabetes, epilepsy and asthma combined – eight million people in the UK have migraine (The Long-term (Neurological) Conditions National Service Framework, Department of Health, 2005).

Migraine is a condition of recurring headaches that may be linked with other symptoms, such as sensitivity to light and noise, nausea, vomiting, dizziness and eyesight changes.

Key facts and figures about migraine

- Migraine is amongst the three most prevalent health conditions worldwide, along with anaemia and hearing loss (The global burden of disease: 2004 update, World Health Organization)
- Among adults of all ages, migraine is one of the top 20 causes of disability expressed as years of healthy life lost to disability (The World Health Report 2001: Mental Health: New understanding new hope)
- Severe migraine attacks are classified by the World Health Organisation as among the most disabling illnesses, comparable to dementia, quadriplegia and active psychosis (Shapiro & Goadsby, Cephalalgia, September 2007)
- Migraine is the least publicly funded of all neurological illnesses relative to its economic impact (Shapiro & Goadsby, Cephalalgia, September 2007)
- In the UK, there are an estimated 190,000 migraine attacks every day (Steiner et al, Cephalalgia, 2003)
- An estimated 25 million days are lost from work or school every year because of migraine (Steiner et al, Cephalalgia, 2003)
- Just over a third (34.3%) of migraine sufferers face difficulties or discrimination at work because of their condition (The Migraine Trust, 2004)
- Over half (54%) of migraineurs experience one or more attacks per month, and 13% claim one or more attacks per week (Steiner et al, Cephalalgia, 2003)
- Women are more likely to have migraine attacks than men – 18% of women and 8% of men (Steiner et al, Cephalalgia, 2003)
- Children can get migraine attacks too. Attacks can start at any age, but they usually start in children who are in their early to mid teens (Goadsby et al, New England Journal of Medicine, 2002)
- A survey of neurologists found that up to one-third of all patients consulted because of headache – more than for any other complaint (WHO, Factsheet 277, March 2004)
- Depression is three times more common in people with migraine or severe headaches than in healthy individuals (WHO, Factsheet 277, March 2004)
- Migraine remains undiagnosed and undertreated in at least 50% of patients, and less than 50% of migraine patients consult a physician (Pavone, Banfi, Vaiani & Panconesi, Cephalalgia, September 2007)

