

Can The Cure For Headaches Be Worse Than The Pain?

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By Dr. Larry A. Johnson, D.C.

Most people are oblivious to the fact that pain-killers can kill more than just pain. Whether you are searching for medications to relieve your migraine headaches, lose weight or eliminate your stomach aches being cautious could save you a lot of grief.

Many drugs that were previously available only through prescription are now available over-the-counter. Today drugs are so common and easily obtained people just assume they are safe. After all, would multi-million dollar companies offer drugs for sale if they weren't safe? Wouldn't the FDA ban medications that could harm or possibly even kill you? Sure, if they knew they were dangerous. But the method of determining which drugs are safe and which drugs are deadly may surprise you. Many times the tests are determined through the use of guinea pigs, which very likely includes you.

Drugs are allowed for sale to the public with the assumption that they are safe. Then, once the public begins using a particular drug in masses the negative side effects will start appearing, side effects that can include dizziness, nausea, internal bleeding, blood pressure increases, heart problems and even death. Not too long ago there were diet pills containing ephedrine that the public was going crazy for. But ephedrine failed its "public test" when it was discovered that it caused death. Tylenol (active ingredient: acetaminophen) is often used for migraine headache relief, but kills people every year because of the liver damage it can cause. Even Ibuprofen and aspirin, pain killers often used for migraine headaches, can be deadly for some. Although the risk is small it is still a risk that should not be taken lightly.

The October 1995 Archives of Internal Medicine reveal the startling results of a study that reviewed the overall effects of prescription drugs on health and well-being. According to the authors, "drug related illness" (from LEGAL drugs) should be considered a "leading disease" in its own right. In 1992, about 200,000 people in the United States died as a result of complications from legal prescription medicine. This does not include over-the-counter drugs or illegal drugs.

Incorrectly prescribed medications kill approximately 180,000 people each year. Only about 1,500 people died when the Titanic sank and yet this horrific and preventable event was, and still is, world

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news. It changed forever the perception and practice of sea travel, ship construction and passenger safety. But when 180,000 people die, the equivalent of about 120 Titanics sinking each year, hardly anyone even takes notice. As reported in 1994 in the Journal of the American Medical Association, incorrectly prescribed medications kill an estimated 180,000 people each year. This claims more American lives annually than crime and car accidents combined.

Some people experience such severe migraine headaches they seek the help of a doctor. But doctors are not immune to errors either. The Journal of the American Medical Association reported recently that iatrogenic illness (illness caused by medical errors or reactions to drugs and medical treatment) has become the third largest killer of Americans, exceeded only by heart disease and cancer.

A team of medical doctors, lawyers and analysts at Harvard University conducted the largest and most comprehensive investigation of medical malpractice and concluded that 75,000 Americans are killed every year by medical treatment through gross negligence. That is equivalent to 50 Titanics sinking per

year. For all their successes, doctors must contend with the fact that many people become sick from either medical errors or reactions to their drugs or medical treatment. Where are the headlines? The outcries?

And the number of deaths due to drugs continues to rise. USA Today, on February 27, 1998, reported that the number of deaths caused by prescription drug errors increased at a rate only exceeded by the number of deaths caused by AIDS. In 1983, 1 out of 539 outpatient deaths was due to a medication error (wrong dosage or wrong drug). By 1993 however, 1 out of every 131 outpatient deaths was due to a medication error.

Admittedly, doctors do save lives and help ease people's pain. They perform a great duty that should not go unheralded. But pain sufferers should start taking responsibility for their own actions. Nobody is more concerned about your health than you are, not the doctor, not the nurses, not your neighbors. Search out and study all of the information that is available before taking a medication that could cause bodily harm. Pain sufferers should ponder both the pros and the cons, the possible pain relief and the possible dangers of the drugs they may end up ingesting.

Deepak Chopra, M.D. in his book Quantum Healing states "The frustrating reality, as far as medical researchers are concerned, is that we already know that the living body is the best pharmacy ever devised. It produces diuretics, painkillers, tranquilizers, sleeping pills, antibiotics, and indeed everything manufactured by the drug companies, but it makes them much, much better. The dosage is always right and given on time; side effects are minimal or nonexistent; and the directions for using the drug are included in the drug itself, as part of its built-in intelligence."

"Is the possible pain relief worth the risk?" This is the question that you should be asking yourself.

Dr. Larry A. Johnson, D.C. has treated patients for 25 years who suffered with pain and migraine headaches

<http://www.soothe-a-ciser.com>

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. He has patented a unique neck cushion that was designed

as a method of achieving relief from migraine headaches without drugs. For information about his home remedy for migraine headaches visit his site.

Cluster Headaches

By Andrew C. Povel

Cluster headaches are the most painful headaches. They are also called "suicide headaches" because unlike migraines, the pain attacks come so suddenly and with such big strength that you are literally helpless. The pain attacks can last a few minutes or up to three hours. After a pause they come again, often at the same time each day.

The pain occurs above or behind one eye and can also trigger additional symptoms like tearing, pupil changes or a droopy eyelid.

There is the theory that cluster headaches are caused by widened arteries which take too much blood and therefore put pressure on the trigeminal nerve.

The brain itself has no pain receptors but the blood vessels. It's unknown why the arteries start to dilate and how exactly this causes the pain.

Another theory with cluster headaches says that it also has something to do with the hypothalamus because the headaches often come at the same time. The hypothalamus regulates our biological clock.

While migraines and cluster headaches are both vascular headaches, they differ. Medications which are good for migraines have no effect on cluster headaches. Often you can feel migraines coming, especially when you also suffer from aura, some preceding neurological disorder which causes sight disturbance and tickling in arms and hands. Cluster headaches come without a sign of warning and with full force, very often during the night during the dreaming phase (REM).

Relaxation brings relief to migraines but makes cluster headaches worse. Moving around or performing a strong exercise brings some relief because it rushes fresh oxygen to the brain. This is also known as one of the fastest ways to fight cluster headaches. Inhaling pure oxygen right at the beginning of the pain attack can stop it within five minutes. The only other ways to battle the pain are direct injections with medications because medications taken orally are too slow.

Over-the-counter painkillers like Aspirin, Paracetamol and Ibuprofen work with migraines but not for cluster headaches. Here you need newer medications like fentanyl or steroids. Triptan drugs like sumatriptan and zolmitriptan also work. To prevent cluster headaches taking Magnesium has helped about 40% of the people.

Cluster headaches can disappear for weeks or months just to come back later with full force. It's the

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best to consult with an experienced neurologist to find the best treatment if you suffer from repeated and severe headaches. Cluster headaches can be more difficult to treat than migraines.

While a serious disease is not the reason for this type of headache and the headache itself is harmless, your doctor should exclude possible diseases with a CT scan and a blood test.

Andrew C. Povel is an expert in headaches and migraines and provides detailed information on headaches and migraines at his web site

<http://www.HeadacheABC.com>



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