
Headband for Migraine Treatment

Q

I recently heard of a new therapy for migraine headache. It involved using an elastic headband and reportedly was quite effective. Do you have any information on this?

A

Patients often report the use of local application of pressure to the scalp for pain relief during migraine headache. This provides temporary relief as long as the pressure is maintained. Most patients use finger pressure. Some use a piece of clothing or a rag tightly tied around the head. A preliminary survey indicated that 92% of patients had attempted some type of local compression. Of

these patients, 85% used finger pressure. The inherent disadvantage is that this type of pressure cannot be sustained.

An elastic band with nylon fasteners (Velcro) was developed so that patients can apply local pressure without their fingers getting tired.¹ Small rubber disks inserted under the band were found to provide more effective local pressure over the area of maximum pain. The band was applied for 30 minutes in each headache during the study. Eighty-seven percent of patients with headaches reported temporary relief of pain. Pain intensity decreased by 80% in 67% of those patients experiencing improvement. Pain intensity returned after removal of the band.

I conclude from this study that a simple elastic band could be used for temporary relief of migraine pain. This provides additional help along with the usual medical therapy. Patients with chronic headache should first consult their physician to confirm the diagnosis of migraine before resorting to any type of treatment, including the use of a headband.

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Questions should be limited to one paragraph. The writer's name and address must accompany the letter; however, they may be omitted from publication if desired.

1. Vijayan N. Headband for migraine headache relief. *Headache*. 1993;33:40-42.