

PRESS RELEASE

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New Survey Finds Gap in Doctor-Patient Migraine Communication

Could migraine patients be doing more to get the most out of their medical visits? According to a new national survey released by the National Headache Foundation (NHF) and GlaxoSmithKline, the answer is yes. For the nearly 30 million migraine sufferers in the U.S., including six million treating with prescription medication, these survey results may have important implications.

The survey, conducted online in November 2010 by Harris Interactive, included 1,218 diagnosed migraine patients taking prescription medications for their migraine attacks as well as 533 physicians who treat between five and 10 migraine patients per week. The findings revealed disparities between what patients and physicians each reported typically discussing during office visits.

One reason for this gap may be that migraines are often addressed as part of a larger health discussion instead of as a point of focus. According to the survey, patients saw their primary migraine healthcare provider an average of six times in the past year, but 70 percent of these visits were related to other health conditions. Despite this, nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of patients reported migraines were discussed on visits where migraine was not the primary reason for the visit.

While patients said the number one topic discussed was prescription migraine medication refills, physicians, on the other hand, said the number one topic discussed was the frequency of migraine attacks. Additional findings further illustrate a communication gap between patients and physicians:

- When it comes to migraine management, nearly eight in 10 physicians (78 percent) said they typically discuss the **timing of when patients take medication(s)** to treat their migraine, but fewer than two in 10 patients (18 percent) report discussing this topic with their physicians;
- Eighty-three (83) percent of physicians said they routinely discuss **personal migraine triggers**, but only 38 percent of patients reported the same;
- Sixty-seven (67) percent of physicians said they typically discuss the **proper use of over-the-counter medications** with their patients, but only 17 percent of patients reported having this discussion.

“The survey results show patients and physicians are having important conversations about migraine management; however, these conversations are not always robust or the primary purpose of a patient’s visit, making discussion priorities unclear,” said Robert Dalton, executive director of the National Headache Foundation. “For example, patients may not always recall key pieces of information from these conversations or physicians may be misinterpreting what is being emphasized to the patient or the time a physician devotes to a particular topic during these discussions.”

Many patients (41 percent) and physicians (61 percent) also said they wished they could have more discussions with each other about patients’ satisfaction with prescription migraine medications. Nearly half of physicians (46 percent) and more than one-quarter of patients (28 percent), however, said that having more pressing health issues to discuss prevented them discussing prescription migraine medication options.

In addition to competing health priorities, one-third of physicians (35 percent) said they find it difficult to evaluate how well their patients’ primary acute prescription migraine medication works, primarily citing their patients’ inability to accurately recall or describe their recent migraine attack (50 percent) or how well their primary migraine medication worked (70 percent) as reasons why it is difficult to evaluate.

“By giving patients and doctors tools to guide conversations, we can help patients and doctors make the most of the limited time they have to talk about migraines,” said Robert Dalton, NHF. “Resources like a migraine diary or symptom tracker are worth the few minutes required each day to complete since this information will enhance patients’ conversations with their physicians.”

Almost all physicians (96 percent) agreed that tools such as a migraine diary, medication usage tracker, pain severity scale or symptoms checklist would help them have more meaningful conversations with their patients about migraines. Likewise, 70 percent of patients said they would find such tools helpful when talking to their healthcare provider about migraines.

Additional survey data and tools to help patients manage doctor visit conversations can be found at www.lowerthepain.com and www.headaches.org.

Survey Methodology

In November 2010, Harris Interactive conducted an online survey, approximately 20 minutes in length, among migraine patients and physicians in the U.S. The goal of the survey was to assess the dialogue between patients and physicians as it relates to migraine management. Editorial and other support for the survey was provided by the National Headache Foundation, with funding, development and other support provided by GlaxoSmithKline.

A sample of 1,218 diagnosed migraine patients were surveyed. All those participating in the survey were 18 years of age and older, had at least two migraines per month, had at least two but fewer than 15 migraine headache days per month and were currently taking a prescription medication intended to stop or lessen migraine pain at the time of the survey. Patients were randomly selected from the Chronic Illness Panel within the Harris Poll Online database and the equivalent panel of a sample provider. No cash incentives were given but qualified respondents accrued points as customary for consumer surveys conducted by Harris Interactive. Results were weighted as needed on the basis of region, age, within gender, education, household income and race/ethnicity. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

A sample of 533 randomly selected U.S. physicians (or healthcare providers, HCPs) who treat migraines were surveyed, including 254 primary care physicians (PCPs) who see at least five migraine patients a week and 279 neurologists who see at least 10 migraine patients a week. Physician findings were weighted to account for a real-world balance of PCPs (93 percent) and neurologists (7 percent), and as needed on the basis of years in practice within gender and region. Physicians were recruited from the American Medical Association’s Masterfile and were offered cash incentives as is customary for market research projects.

About National Headache Foundation

The NHF is a nonprofit organization that has pioneered the way headaches have been diagnosed and treated over the last 40 years. No other organization provides such comprehensive educational resources and tools to headache sufferers, their families, physicians who treat headache sufferers, allied healthcare professionals and to the public. The leaders of the organization are world-renowned experts in the field who have pulled together many easy-to-use tools and resources to help people better understand headaches and options for headache care. This information is available on the NHF website at www.headaches.org or by calling 1-888-NHF-5552 (M-F, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT).

About GlaxoSmithKline

GlaxoSmithKline – one of the world’s leading research-based pharmaceutical and healthcare companies – is committed to improving the quality of human life by enabling people to do more, feel better and live longer. For further information go to us.gsk.com, follow us on twitter.com/GSKUS or visit our [blog \(www.morethanmedicine.us.gsk.com/blog/\)](http://blog.morethanmedicine.us.gsk.com/blog/).

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