

Health Awareness

Study Finds Much More Can Be Done To Prevent Migraine Pain

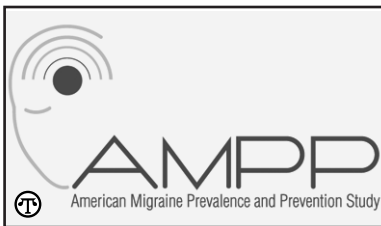
(NAPSA)—For the nearly 30 million Americans who suffer from migraines, their lives can be severely interrupted, often causing them to miss work and social activities. But 40 percent—or nearly 12 million people—may benefit from preventive therapy, possibly reducing the debilitating effects of migraines.

According to the American Migraine Prevalence and Prevention (AMPP) Study, the largest study ever conducted of migraine sufferers, only one in five Americans currently uses preventive therapies, even though millions may benefit. Results from the study, sponsored by the National Headache Foundation, revealed that increased discussions are needed between migraine sufferers and their health care providers.

“The ultimate goal of every migraine patient and his or her health care provider is a life with fewer interruptions caused by migraine pain and disability,” said Richard Lipton, M.D., lead study researcher, professor and vice chair of neurology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City and director of the Montefiore Headache Unit. “Preventive medications can decrease migraine occurrence by 50 to 80 percent, as well as reduce the severity and duration of migraines that occur. Preventive treatment is considerably under-used, found the study.

Quality of Life Affected

According to the AMPP Study,



You may want to talk to your doctor about preventing rather than just treating migraines.

nine out of 10 sufferers report they can’t “function normally” during days in which a migraine strikes and nearly three in 10 require bed rest. More than 25 percent missed at least one day of work over the past three months and almost 50 percent report their migraines prevented them from doing household chores. Approximately 80 percent of migraine sufferers experience abnormal sensitivity to light and noise, and nearly 75 percent report nausea and vomiting.

“For those who don’t have migraines, it is often difficult to understand the pain and life-altering effect these headaches have on the sufferer and their family,” said Suzanne Simons, executive director of the National Headache Foundation in Chicago. “Our goal is not only to help those suffering from migraines but also to educate Americans that migraines are a legitimate health issue with profound social and economic costs.”

Prevention of migraines differs from just treating them. Prevention of migraines involves taking a daily prescription medication to help reduce the occurrence of migraines and possibly reduce the length as well as intensity. Although breakthrough migraines may still occur, there are treatments available. In comparison, simply treating a migraine involves taking medication once a migraine starts. Additionally, lifestyle changes, such as limiting certain foods and avoiding stress, may be made to avoid triggers that can cause migraines.

Based on a validated questionnaire, the study’s researchers reviewed headache symptoms and frequency, impairment, current or past use of migraine prevention medications (prescribed and/or over-the-counter) and use of medications prescribed for other indications but known to prevent migraine headaches (coincident use).

Researchers plan to conduct follow-up studies to assess the impact of preventive therapy versus nontreatment of American headache sufferers.

The AMPP Study was conducted for the National Headache Foundation through funding from Ortho-McNeil Neurologics, Inc.

For more information on headache causes and treatments, visit the National Headache Foundation at www.headaches.org or call 1-888-NHF-5552 (M-F, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT).