

MIGRAINE FACT SHEET

Definition¹

A migraine is a form of headache which is usually severe, throbbing and one sided.

Symptoms

It is frequently associated with nausea, vomiting and sensitivity to light and sound. Patients sometimes do not feel quite right prior to a migraine. They may have mood changes or unusual cravings for food. A migraine is sometimes preceded by warning symptoms which may involve the eyes, the balance systems or limbs (aura). Children may experience abdominal pain instead of headaches.

Causes

Trigger factors include fatigue, stress, environmental change, hormonal change and food (caffeine, cheese, chocolate, red wine etc.).

Demographics

Migraines are estimated to affect about 400,000 people in Singapore. The first large-scale clinic-based headache survey found an alarming 11.6% of patients missed an average of more than seven days of work, school and social engagements per month.

Impact

In 2002, the World Health Organisation identified migraines as one of the top 20 causes of disabilities in the world.

¹ Information on definition, symptoms and causes extracted from <http://www.medinfo.co.uk>.