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Migraine Co Morbidity in Patients with Multiple Sclerosis

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Background: Migraine headache is a common feature in multiple sclerosis (MS) patients with variable prevalence among the studies. It can influence the diagnosis, radiological evaluation, treatment, and quality of life for these patients.

Objective: To assess the frequency and severity of migraine in a sample of Egyptian patients with MS as well as to study the clinical and radiological characteristics in those patients.

Design & Method: This is a cross sectional study, conducted on fifty five patients diagnosed with relapsing-remitting MS according to Mc Donald's criteria (2010), recruited from Neurology Department Ain Shams University in the period between November 2013 and July 2014. They were subjected to a full clinical and neurological assessment stressing on age at onset of MS, duration of illness, current therapy, and yearly exacerbation rate. Neurological impairment was evaluated by multiple sclerosis severity scale (MSS) and Expanded Disability scale (EDSS). Migraine diagnosis was established using a questionnaire based on criteria proposed by the International Classification of Headache Disorders 2nd Edition (ICHD2), and migraine severity evaluation was evaluated using migraine disability assessment scale (MIDAS). Magnetic resonance image (MRI) of the brain and spinal cord were also performed.

Result: Migraine headache was present in 19 patients (34.5%). 12 of the patients with coexisting migraine and MS develop migraine years earlier than MS (63.2%) while 4 patients had first attack of migraine concomitant with the first MS attack (21.1%) and (15.7%) had their first migraine attack after their first MS attack . There was no statistical significant difference between the patients with and without migraine regarding the age of onset of MS, duration of illness, annual relapse rate, EDSS and MSS. However, midbrain periaqueductal affection on MRI was more prevalent among MS patients with migraine (21.1%) compared to (2.8%) non migranious patients. There was also a statistical significant correlation between occurrence of severe migraine attack before MS relapse in patients who developed migraine headache for the first time concurrently with the first MS presentation (75%).

Conclusion: Migraine is co morbid in patients with MS. The exact etiology and pathogenesis of these two seemingly disparate disorders is not completely understood. Thorough evaluation of headache in MS patients helps to optimize the medical treatment and improve quality of life.