

**Survey of primary headaches  
at a headache clinic in Japan  
-What kind of patients visit  
a headache clinic and  
what can a headache specialist  
do for them?-**



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Although the prevalence of primary headaches is 40% in Japan, many people never consult a doctor for their headaches. The author investigated all patients attending a headache clinic over 5 years. A total of 2742 patients (655 men and 2087 women, aged 6-93 years old) visited the headache clinic. The reasons for visiting the headache clinic were: suffering from headache for a long time, worsening headaches, over the counter treatments (OTCs) ineffective, and worry about brain diseases. Of 2742 patients, 1743 patients (65.4%) had migraine and 397 patients (14.5%) had medication-overuse headache (MOH). Among 1743 migraine sufferers, 1068 patients (61.3%) had visited doctors before and 842 patients had taken prescribed medication. Among 842 patients, 48.6% had taken triptans and only 12.8% were prescribed prophylactic medicine. Among 397 patients who suffered from MOH, 309 patients (77.8%) had visited doctors before and 237 patients had taken prescribed medication. Among 237 patients, 23.6% were prescribed prophylactic medicine.

Patients who visited a headache clinic had severe headaches and they were not satisfied with their previous medications.

Efficacy of acupuncture and other oriental medicine should be investigated as headache treatments.