

Primary headaches; Update of classification and treatment



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Primary headache disorders include migraine, tension-type headache and cluster-type headaches. Secondary headaches are symptoms of other diseases such as subarachnoid hemorrhage or meningitis.

Pathophysiology of primary headaches, particularly migraine, has been studied as part of brain science. Neuro-vascular mechanism was elucidated at the molecular level. Neuroimaging of primary headache has revealed regional changes in brain function and vessels. Evidence-based drug treatment was developed and is now used at the clinical practice. Yet, chronification of migraine is increasing in recent years, due to difficulty in adjusting to psychological and physical stress and tension. Chronic migraine, a new headache disorder defined by the International Classification, is resistant to drug treatment. Efficacy of acupuncture and other oriental medicine should be investigated as new treatment.