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Common Primary Headache Disorders; Irritable Bowel Syndrome: A Case Study

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I. INTRODUCTION

Headache is a leading physical symptom for which patients seek medical attention. During their lifetime, 99% of women and 93% of men will experience a headache of some type.¹ It is useful to divide the causes of headache into primary and secondary disorders. *Primary headache* has no other definable primary cause for the pain. *Secondary headache* is caused by another defined pathologic entity, such as subarachnoid hemorrhage, sinusitis, or cocaine use (**Figure 1**). An accurate diagnosis ensures appropriate therapeutic choices. This review focuses on the most common types of primary headache disorders. The most widely used headache classification system is presented, and common medication therapy is reviewed.

CLASSIFICATION OF HEADACHE

In the 1960s, a National Institutes of Health committee compiled a headache classification system.² For the most part, this older classification scheme divided headaches into vascular, muscle contraction, and secondary causes. The next major effort at classification was published in 1988 by the International Headache Society (IHS).³ The widely accepted IHS scheme attempted to codify all headache types into one of 12 groups. In general, groups 1 through 4 describe primary headache disorders, whereas groups 5 through 12 describe secondary disorders. **Appendix 1** shows a complete listing of the headache types. Because of its well-defined headache type criteria, the IHS classification is used in most of the newer migraine drug trials.⁴⁻⁶ The original article in *Cephalalgia* gives specific criteria for each diagnosis.³