

MILD, FREQUENT HEADACHES IN A MIGRAINEUR OR IN A NON-MIGRAINEUR ARE TENSION-TYPE HEADACHES, NOT MILD MIGRAINE (YES)

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Tension-type headache differs from migraine in a number of ways, particularly in its relative lack of focality, nausea, and aura symptomatology, and its generally lower pain intensity. A number of patients with migraine seem to experience milder non-migrainous headaches either occasionally or frequently. The question of diagnosis of these headaches sometimes arises, particularly if there are migrainous features. This is important, as evidence-based treatment options for tension-type headache are available which differ from recommendations for migraine treatment.

The key problem in differentiating migraine from tension type headache is the lack of objective diagnostic tests. Thus, the International Classification of Headache Disorders (1986) and the revised edition (ICHD II – 2004) have defined tension-type headache and migraine symptomatically. If these criteria are applied to migraineurs' milder, non-migrainous headaches, most will satisfy the definition of tension type headache.

References from medical literature will be presented supporting the diagnosis of tension-type headache in migraineurs as well as a rationale in favor of making this diagnosis in appropriate patients.