



Editorial

Migraine in Covid-19 lockdown

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There is a well-known curiosity among patients who suffer from migraine that various factors such as a particular variety of food, a specific smell, change in weather, stress, disturbances in sleep, menstruation and fasting, among others, can precipitate a migraine crisis.¹⁻¹¹ Even smartphone electromagnetic radiation may be a modern technological trigger of a migraine attack.¹² Often after exposure to these factors, the patient has a migraine crisis minutes later.

Covid-19 has a headache as one of the main symptoms in clinical expression,¹³⁻¹⁷ besides the pathognomonic anosmia.¹⁸⁻¹⁹

In recent years, great changes have occurred in how people organize their lives. The Covid-19 pandemic substantially changed everyone's daily lives²⁰ with behavioral changes to stop or reduce the spread of Sars-Cov-2. Thus, the world population had to stay home, in the so-called lockdown. Moving away from social interaction is a significant maleficent measure for mental health that may expose individuals to several factors which could facilitate migraine attacks.²¹⁻²⁴

Studies were published following migraine patients during the Covid-19 lockdown to assess the number of attacks, possible triggering factors, and preventive measures.^{21, 23-26 23, 27-32}

Al-Hashel and colleagues²⁶ address with great propriety how the Covid-19 lockdown has affected the migraine pattern among individuals living in Kuwait.

The authors studied 340 subjects who listed 15 classical triggers for their migraine attacks and evaluated several possible other precipitating factors of migraine attacks. They describe significant changes in how such factors would act before and after the Covid-19 pandemic.²⁶

Interestingly, the cultural relationship with one of the most cited migraine triggers - a strong or particular type of smell - was commented on during the lockdown. The reason that odors are indicated as the main trigger of migraine attacks is interpreted as increased consumption and exposure to incense smoke and the use of Arab perfumes by the population.

Kuwaiti population is known to use Arabic perfume and smell incense frequently. Many people in the Arab Gulf region believe that incense smoke can kill germs and microbes in the air, providing a feeling of protection from the virus.

The article also discusses how the Covid-19 lockdown influenced other migraine triggers in patients registered at the headache clinic at the Ib Sina hospital in Kuwait.

We conclude that there has been a drastic change in the way humans communicate in the last two years, possibly even with a return to a situation without Covid-19 or living with mild endemics, the world will never go back to what it was in 2019. Exposure to certain precipitating factors of migraine attacks may have changed in frequency and intensity, or even clustering of factors that can trigger a headache attack together. Great adaptations occurred, we would even consider that they were established because of the pandemic, but they proved to be come to stay, facilitating work performance and academic activities.

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