



Adherence to the headache diary in a specialized outpatient clinic of a tertiary service in Fortaleza

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Introdução

Headache is the most commonly evaluated symptom by neurologists, with a global prevalence of 35% of the population. Moreover, it is one of the most disabling clinical conditions, causing suffering and negative repercussions in the personal, social and professional scope of the patient, leading to direct and indirect costs for society. Faced with this negative impact on functionality and quality of life caused by headaches, there is a need to better understand the frequency and intensity of pain in patients to guide therapeutic goals. A strategy used for this purpose is to fill in the headache diary, where the patient performs a self-report, mainly the number of headache days per month and its intensity. In our service, a trained nurse gives a lecture in the waiting room, presenting the headache diary, its importance and guiding its correct completion. In addition, residents participating in the outpatient clinic are instructed to approach and encourage patient adherence to the diary during the consultation.

Objective

To know the prevalence of completing the headache diary in the specialized outpatient clinic of the General Hospital of Fortaleza (HGF). Methods: This is a cross-sectional and descriptive study carried out with a sample of 65 patients followed at the HGF headache outpatient clinic, from March to May 2023. A questionnaire was made with sociodemographic data, time of follow-up at the outpatient clinic and reason for the patient not to bring the headache diary with him/her to the current appointment.

Results

Of the 65 patients interviewed, we found that the average age was 48 years and that 89.2% were women and 10.8% were men. Most patients (46.2%) had more than 8 years of schooling, 32.3% from 4 to 8 years and 21.5% had less than 4 years of schooling. Most patients (53.8%) had been followed up for more than 3 years at the outpatient clinic, 12.3% from 2 to 3 years, 15.4% from 1 to 2 years and 18.5% less than 1 year. 42 patients (64.6%) did not take the headache diary and, when asked about the reason, 11 patients (16.9%) reported forgetting to take the diary, 11 patients (16.9%) reported not having received it before or that they were in their first consultation, 5 patients (7.7%) reported not having been instructed to fill in the diary, 3 patients (4.6%) lost the diary sheet and 9 patients (13.8%) did not think it was important or did not understand how to fill it in. Other justifications presented that were not divided into categories were 2 patients with daily headache and 1 patient with visual impairment. We found no statistically significant relevance between sex, age, education or follow-up time and filling out the diary. Our sample is mainly composed of a young population with good education, understanding the importance of the headache diary being expected. However, most patients did not adhere to this strategy, not taking the diary to the consultation for various reasons. Furthermore, 13.8% of patients did not realize the importance of this instrument, denoting a lack of communication between the service and the assisted population. As a specialized service, we must prioritize and insist on this gold standard strategy for the therapeutic follow-up of patients, intensifying, for example, the doctor's approach during the consultation. One possibility of optimizing the filling in of the diary would be to give the patient the option of doing so through a smartphone application for those who prefer, considering that most patients forget to physically take it to the appointment.

Conclusion

Most patients did not adhere to completing the headache diary for several reasons, the main ones being forgetfulness and not understanding its importance.

Palavras-chave: Headache;Diary;Adherence;Pain;Functionality;Quality of Life.