



Alternative therapeutic methods for headache: a literature review

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Introduction

headache represents a group of diseases with a great potential for harmful effects on well-being, if not treated appropriately and efficiently. This condition can be classified as primary or secondary. Primary headaches are more frequently associated with less severe etiologies and are often related to emotional stress or fatigue. The symptoms caused by headaches are very diverse and can affect people's daily activities, such as work and study. This condition can be treated with simple analgesics, however, it may be necessary to use combinations and therapeutic associations. Alternative therapeutic methods, such as yoga and acupuncture, are being successfully used as adjuvants in this therapy.

Objective

to review the scientific evidence relating the effectiveness of alternative therapies in the treatment of headaches. Methods this is a bibliographic review using scientific products published in the PubMed (National Library of Medicine) and Scielo (Scientific Electronic Library Online) databases, using the science and health descriptors: headache, alternative therapies and analgesics. The inclusion criteria for this bibliographic review were articles and texts published between 2001 and 2022, available free of charge in full in Portuguese in databases related to the subject of the summary. Articles published before 2001 that did not satisfactorily address the study topic and review criteria were removed from the sample.

Results

the most prevalent etiology of the disease is primary headache, which can be caused by a tiring and stressful routine. In this context, some people may have contraindications to the use of the drugs most commonly used to treat headaches, such as allergic reactions or a history of drug addiction. Alternative therapies consist of mitigating stress in the person's body; acupuncture, for example, uses the application of needles to specific points so that this excess energy is released, mitigating stress and, consequently, headache episodes. In this sense, acupuncture can work as a non-opioid analgesic with a better safety profile. In the case of yoga, this alternative therapy is related improving headache duration, headache frequency, and pain intensity in patients suffering from tension-type primary headaches.

Conclusion

headache is a heterogeneous pathology that has various therapeutic methods, which may involve the administration of analgesic drugs or not. Therefore, at the same time, alternative treatment measures for this condition are emerging to mitigate the harmful effects caused by the headaches on the patient's daily activities and to cover as many people as possible in headache therapy. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce measures to inform the population about these alternative methods of treating headaches.

Keywords: Headache; Methods; Therapeutic; Acupuncture; Yoga.