

Preface

Within the multifaceted and multidisciplinary field of headache, cervicogenic headache is today the nosographic and clinical entity which attracts the most varied of conceptual convergences and scientific disputes, of clinical proof and therapeutic approaches.

This clinical entity is usually observed by internists, rheumatologists, psychiatrists, orthopedists, neurologists and neurosurgeons, as well as practitioners of complementary medicine, and forms such a compact clinical expression as to make the holistic approach quite difficult in these times of fragmentation within the field of medicine.

The purpose of this monograph is to offer an updated and definitive picture of cervicogenic headache. It was inspired and made possible by the XIII Meeting of the Cervicogenic Headache International Study Group, which on 19th June 1999 held a joint meeting in Rome together with the Italian Society for the Study of Headache. The opportunity of bringing together some of the most famous and most accredited experts on the subject, and the need to provide a synoptic yet global and updated picture on the state of research on cervicogenic headache, led to the creation of this monograph. We are certain that the prevalence and incidence of this clinical syndrome, cervicogenic headache, has been greatly underestimated, but, unlike its older sisters, tension headache and cluster headache, it still does not enjoy diagnostic-therapeutic guidelines that are adequate and accepted and must therefore be regarded as

the testing ground of the next few years. Its daily clinical occurrence, together with increasing scientific evidence pointing to an inflammatory pathology, have led to its gradual transition from the “scientifically orphan” classification as a pain syndrome of the neck and head to that of a well-defined clinical syndrome with therapeutic approaches which, though limited in number, have been validated and accepted by the international scientific community.

An additional annotation should be made as a reminder that we hope for a broader application of the classification and diagnostic criteria, for a univocal utilisation of the laboratory parameters which monitor its evolution, and for a correct application of the therapeutic methods so as to allow the rapid identification and effective treatment of this very debilitating form of headache.

The desire to reach a greater understanding of this chronic pathology of the head and neck is forced upon us by the clinical evidence indicating cervicogenic headache, together with chronic tension headache and migraine, as the greatest source of the syndrome of abuse of analgesics, a hidden but serious clinical situation.

We trust that these scientific and educational goals will be reached without losing sight of the fact that the primary aim of clinical research is the attainment of a tangible improvement in the quality of life of this neglected population of chronic headache patients.

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