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Title : Migraine biggest headache for women, rural population: Study

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Migraine biggest headache for women, rural population: Study

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Bengaluru: Women and people in rural areas are the worst affected by migraines, says a new community-based study conducted by National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (Nimhans). The main triggers are unhealthy lifestyle, lack of sleep and stress.

While women are known to be prone to migraine headaches due to higher levels of estrogen, the findings relating to the rural populace has been illuminating for doctors.

Villagers with limited access to healthcare fail to get treatment at the right time, say experts

"People in villages may have limited access to healthcare hence diagnosis and treatment may not occur at the right time. They spend more time working in direct sunlight and exposure to pesticides and other chemicals can trigger migraine," said Dr PR Krishnan, consultant neurologist at Fortis Hospital.

For many, migraines can be debilitating and lead to loss of income, apart from suffering the blinding headaches and accompanying nausea and sensitivity to light and sound.

Viswanath, 48, a farmer, finally consulted a doctor this month after suffering headaches for years. When he was diagnosed with migraine, he was upset when the doctor told him that he

HOW TO REDUCE FREQUENCY OF ATTACKS

AVOID KNOWN TRIGGERS

Every individual has a set of specific triggers. Knowing these triggers and avoiding them can prevent attacks

STAY HYDRATED
Dehydration is one of the major reasons for headache.

Drinking ample amount of water is beneficial



STOP POPPING PILLS

The first thing people do when they get a headache is pop a pill without medical supervision. Medication overuse is one of the reasons for headache and limiting intake of pills can reduce the frequency of migraine



GET ENOUGH REST

Stress is a strong trigger for migraine. Adequate sleep is a good way to counter stress and prevent migraines. Yoga, breathing exercises, meditation, and eating nutrient rich food on time also help



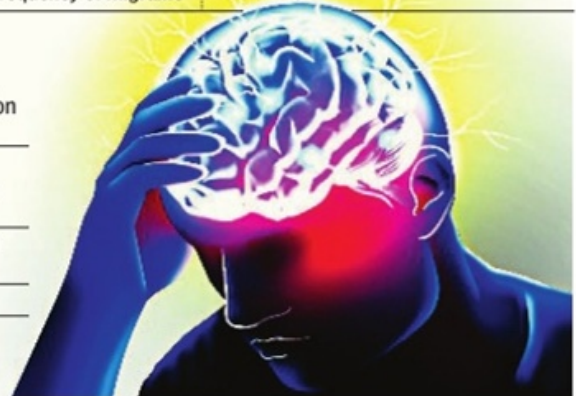
CHILDHOOD MIGRAINE

About 5% of children suffer from childhood migraine. They usually have a family history of migraine

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EFFECTS OF AILMENT IF NOT TREATED CORRECTLY

- Loss of quality time for self, occupation and social events
- Increased risk for cardiovascular disease, seizures, sleep disruption, and mood disorders
- Migraine with aura is associated with increased risk of stroke
- Work disabilities
- If it becomes chronic— anxiety, depression



needs to stay away from pesticides and sunlight, which trigger the headaches. "I have to work in the fields to earn a livelihood. How can I stay away from the sun and pesticides?" he asked.

The study by Nimhans covered 1,000 people in both rural and urban areas, and was supported by World Health Organization, World Headache Alliance, International Headache Society and European Headache Federation. "The result showed that mostly women and the rural population are the worst affected by migraine," said Dr Girish B Kulkarni, assistant

professor of neurology at Nimhans and one of the co-investigators of the study.

In another study, covering 330 patients at Nimhans, it was found that only one in six patients were taking appropriate treatment at the right time to prevent recurrence of migraines. "Most of these patients were either unaware of the causes of migraine and did not know how to prevent it or were negligent and did not visit a doctor," said Dr Kulkarni.

Dr Anil R, consultant neurologist at Columbia Asia Hospital, said: "Unhealthy lifestyle including

lack of sleep, staying hungry for long periods and stress are some of the major triggers for migraine. In the city, strong smells, loud noises, allergies due to excessive pollution, and flickering lights could cause it."

Migraines are caused by an interplay of genetic and environmental factors. "It is thought to be attributable to a hypersensitive central nervous system that has difficulty in properly modulating normal sensory stimuli, which implies that migraine occurs due to a more-than-normal sensitive brain," said Dr Krishnan.

Patients with frequent migraine attacks should not self-medicate, but should see a doctor immediately and get appropriate medication.

"If anybody gets three or four attacks of headache a month with severe or frightening symptoms (weakness of limbs or blurring of vision), medication prescribed by a qualified doctor should be used," said Dr Krishnan. The correct dosage is helpful in 50%-80% of patients in reducing headaches.

"The medicines are started in low doses and gradually increased to get desired effects," he added.