
Clinical Correspondence

Posttraumatic Episodic Status Migrainosus

Randolph W. Evans, MD

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Posttraumatic migraines commonly occur after concussions in sports¹ and other civilian injuries. The migraines may be episodic or can be daily from onset. To my knowledge, recurrent episodes of migraine status only have not been previously described after a sports head injury.

This is a 31-year-old male, who was playing volleyball 8 months prior when he dove for a ball and another player's knee hit the back of his head. He had no loss of consciousness, was not dazed, and had no imbalance, but did have fatigue subsequently.

The patient first experienced headache 5 days after the injury that was constant for 1.5 months and described as an aching at the top and back of the head with an intensity of 3-7/10 associated with light and noise sensitivity but no nausea or aura. Since then, he has had 7 similar additional headaches with a duration of 1.5-4 weeks. He has taken acetaminophen occasionally without help. He reports that exercise has precipitated the headache bouts.

He has had trouble with word finding, distractibility, and "brain fog," which has improved although

he seems a little forgetful. He has also been angered easily and a little anxious but not depressed.

He saw a primary care physician. He then saw a neuropsychologist 3 months after the injury who administered the ImpACT neurocognitive test battery with normal findings. He saw a chiropractor for treatment who obtained an MRI of the brain and cervical spine 2 weeks prior with normal findings. Four weeks prior, a complete blood count, comprehensive metabolic profile, TSH, free T4, and vitamin B12 level were normal.

Past medical history was negative except for a concussion in high school with brief loss of consciousness. No prior headaches. There was no family history of migraine. Neurological examination was normal.

This case is consistent with the 20 previously reported cases termed episodic status migrainosus (18 cases)² or episodic daily migraine (2 cases),³ which is a rare migraine variant characterized by recurrent attacks of migraine lasting more than 72 hours untreated or unsuccessfully treated.² Previously reported precipitating factors include the following: stress/anxiety, lack of sleep, menses, flickering lights, food, and smells.² Thomas Jefferson may have had this migraine variant with stress as a precipitant.

From the Department of Neurology, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX, USA.

Address all correspondence to R.W. Evans, 1200 Binz #1370, Houston, TX 77004, USA, email: revansmd@gmail.com

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Although the first headache occurred within 7 days of the injury meeting International Classification of Headache Disorders, 3rd edition, time of onset criteria for post traumatic headaches,⁴ it is not clear that the patient met criteria for concussion. The definition and threshold of injury for concussion in sports is problematic.⁵

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