

An overview of headache in pregnancy and lactation

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Abstract:

Headache is one of the most prevalent complaints in a woman's reproductive period and in pregnancy and puerperium. Primary headaches including migraine, tension-type headache (TTH), and trigeminal autonomic cephalalgias (TACs) account for most of these headaches. It is fundamental to consider secondary causes in the differential diagnosis of headache, which may require urgent investigation. Pre-eclampsia, eclampsia, CVT, certain types of ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke, SAH, pituitary apoplexy, RCVS, PRES, and thunderclap headache show an overlapping clinical presentations and need to be treated emergently. One or more between electroencephalography, ultrasound of the vessels of the head and neck, brain MRI and MR angiography with contrast, brain CT, ophthalmoscopy and lumbar puncture will distinguish primary and secondary headaches. Migraine and all other headache disorders, whether primary or secondary, and particularly when they are chronic or resistant to treatment, are an important problem both for the mother and the fetus. Medications used for the treatment of primary headaches are not specific to these headache disorders. Options in prescription preventive medications are limited and it may be best to consider the safest interventions, which are lifestyle changes and behavioural treatment for stress management.