



# Prevalence of Migraine in Medical Students of Dubai Medical College, UAE

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## Abstract

### Introduction

Migraine presents as a pulsatile, throbbing type of headache with poorly understood etiology. Medical students are exposed to a high level of stress during their medical training. The current study was conducted as the first epidemiological study to evaluate migraine and its associated factors among medical students in UAE.

### Objective

To assess the prevalence of migraine in students at Dubai Medical College, UAE.

### Methodology

A cross-sectional questionnaire-based study was undertaken for three months between December 2020 & February 2021, in Dubai Medical College for Girls, UAE. The students from the first to the final year of MBBS (n=147) participated in the anonymous survey after prior consent.

### Results

Positive history of Migraine was found in 37% of the students. Family history of migraine was noted in 45% of students from this sub-group. The duration of migraine history is between 1-5 years in nearly 62% of them with a duration of 1-5 hours and occurring at a frequency of 1 episode per week in the majority. 58% of the students experienced an aura preceding the migraine attack, while 42% did not. Lack of sleep, stress & psychological factors (anxiety, depression, anger) constituted the main triggering factors for the migraine attacks. Conversely, adequate sleep, rest, medications (analgesics) & coffee were the salient relieving factors. The students were suffering from mild - moderately severe migraine predominantly. Associated illness in the form of anxiety, allergic rhinitis & polycystic ovarian disease was noted in some. Medical advice for the migraine was obtained by a very small number of the students.

## Results

Table 1: History of Migraine

History of Migraine	n	Percentage of Students
n=147		
Positive history	55	37.4 %
Negative history	92	62.6%

Table 2: Family History of Migraine

Family history of migraine	Percentage	Percentage of Students
n=55		
Positive	45% (25)	37.4 %
Negative	29% (16)	62.6%
Not Sure	25 % (14)	62.6%

Table 3: Duration of Migraine History

	n=55
<1 year	43% (22)
1-5 years	32% (26)
6-10 years	10 % (5)
11-15 years	7% (2)

Table 4: Migraine Associated with Aura

Students with preceding symptoms	Students without preceding symptoms
n=55	
58.2% (32)	41.8 % (23)
Vomiting, nausea, photophobia, phonophobia, vertigo, flashes of light	

Table 5: Severity of Migraine

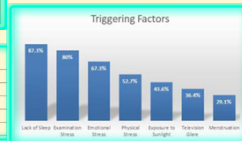
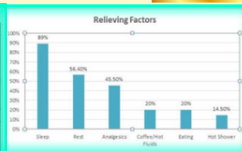
Mild	
<1 attack per month, lasts up to 8 hours, no incapacitation	47.3% (27)
Moderate	
One or more attacks per month, lasting 6-24 hours, mild associated with prominent nausea/vomiting	40% (22)
Severe	
2-3 or more attacks per month, lasting 12-48 hours (about 2 days), associated with vertigo, vomiting & other symptoms	12.7% (6)
incapacitation present during attack.	

Table 6: Associated illness with Migraine

	n=55
Anxiety	80 %
Allergic rhinitis	46.7%
Bronchial asthma	13.3%
Epilepsy	1.36%

Table 7: Students Seeking Medical Advice for Migraine

	n=55
No	84.4%
Yes	15.6%



## Discussion

Our study shows 37% of medical students studying in Dubai Medical College to be suffering from migraine which is comparable to previous studies showing a prevalence between 33-98% in medical students. It is noted that majority of the students (75%) had migraine without any preceding aura and 25% had aura comprising of photophobia, phonophobia & vomiting. Family history of migraine is markedly noted in this study. Anxiety was the prominent associated illness followed by allergic rhinitis in the affected students. Lack of sleep, stress & exams were the major factors responsible for the initiation of migraine attacks. Measures like proper diet, exercises, time management, positive attitude & taking a break can be very helpful in relieving stress which is also observed in our study.



## Conclusion

Migraine can have a detrimental effect on a student's life. Supportive measures like sufficient sleep, time management, proper diet with exercise & pharmacological treatment with triptans, beta blockers, antidepressants & antipsychotics would bring down the frequency & severity of the migraine attacks.

