

# The prevalence of headache in a population of health care workers and the effects on productivity costs

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## KEY WORDS

Headache; health care workers; productivity; health promotion

## SUMMARY

**Background:** Headache is reported as one of the most frequent causes of lost work time and reduced work efficiency.

**Aims:** The aim of this study was to determine the impact of headache and its consequences as regards absence from work among health care workers and reduced work efficiency.

**Methods:** The prevalence of headache and its effects on ability in daily activities and work productivity were studied and assessed on occasion of the periodic health examination of 3,620 health care workers of the Provincial Health Care Trust, Trento, by means of the MIDAS disability scale and parameters derived from criteria established by the International Headache Society.

**Results:** In the previous three months 27.1% had suffered from at least one episode of headache. The prevalence of migraine was 9.9%, with a significantly higher percentage among women (12.9%). The total administrative costs estimated per working year were about € 136,836 for migraine and about € 44,614 for tension-type headache (TTH). The prevalence and features of migraine and TTH were studied.

**Conclusions:** Data regarding the prevalence of migraine were similar to the results reported in other studies. The vast majority of the individuals reported no absenteeism over the previous three months. The study confirmed that we should continue to manage the presumed job-related trigger factors in the best possible manner, counselling should be made available to health care workers during the periodic health examinations or upon request, and if needed, the patient should be sent to a neurology specialist for a free examination and appropriate pharmacological treatment.