Post-traumatic Cluster Headache In A Patient With Migraines: Is There An Association?

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Introduction

• Post-traumatic headache of migraine and tension-type variety is a well-known entity, whereas new onset of cluster headache after head injury is a rarely encountered phenomenon.
• We present a case of a patient who developed cluster headaches and subdural hematoma after head trauma, and the treatment options given the associated brain bleed.

Case Description

• A 57-year-old African American male with medical history of hypertension, migraine headaches, type II diabetes mellitus, coronary artery disease and combined heart failure presented with fall and trauma to head.

Discussion

• Headache after head trauma is a frequently observed phenomenon, but management is nuanced if head trauma has resulted in contusions or bleeds.
• Headache may be resistant to regular treatment modalities as was observed in our patient. As sumatriptan is contraindicated in patients with history of ischemic cardiac events or stroke, fewer medications may be available to abort the episode of cluster headache when 100% oxygen is either unavailable or ineffective.
• In our case, topiramate and divalproex sodium were used along with opioids, with divalproex sodium eventually providing relief to the patient.
• It is vital to recognize symptoms in a post-traumatic patient as it can be easily confused with migraine and tension headaches. Further studies are required to understand the pathophysiological mechanisms of post-traumatic headache, so new targets of treatments may be identified.