

Are We Underutilizing Head 'ache' in Minor Traumatic Brain Injury?

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Introduction

Minor Head Injuries account for a majority of cases in head trauma. Typically this defined as "History of blunt head trauma to head in a patient with GCS of 13 -15".

Most of the victims present with headache, and the significance of headache on management of head injury is controversial.

Objectives

1. find out the presence of generalized headache or localized headache at 2 hours of injury to head, in GCS 15 patients
2. The possibility of having a serious head injury in patients having a significant generalized headache

Methodology

All the Patients above 16 years of age who presented to ED with a GCS of 15 at 2 hours of head injury without any previous neurology, not on any anticoagulating agents were included into the study. Patients with significant other injuries were excluded.

A pre-tested questionnaire was filled by the first contact medical officer at 2 hours of injury and patient was followed up again at 24 hours of injury. The questionnaire included the age, gender, mechanism of injury, criteria for **Canadian CT rule**. The severity of headache was assessed using visual analogue.

Results

Out of 52 subjects 48 patients complained of either localized headache (29, 55%) or generalized headache (19, 36%).

Out of 16(30%) patients who had CT brain, according to **Canadian CT rule**, nearly 40% CT had positive findings.

In which all the patients who ended up with positive CT brain complained of significant (*more than 6 in visual analogue scale*) generalized headache. All Patients who complained of only a localized pain at 2 hours of injury ended up with negative findings at 24 hours.

Headache	(+) CT	(-) CT
Generalized	40%	60%
Localized	0%	100%

Conclusion

Significant generalized headache at 2 hours from head injury in GCS 15 patients should be concerned seriously and can be included in adult minor TBI management protocols as a reliable clinical tool.

Localized headache following minor TBI without generalization is a good negative clinical finding.

Further studies with a large cohort should be encouraged in analyzing headache in minor head injury.

References

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