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The City of London Migraine Clinic Newsletter

MAY 2011

With the holiday season fast approaching we discuss why it is not always fun in the sun for migraine sufferers, and more importantly we explore the ways in which we can avoid that pre or post holiday headache. Also this month: A concert in aid of the clinic and in memory, News updates and Spanish holiday offers.

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1. Avoid the Bane of Holiday Migraine

by Dr. Anomi Panditharatne

As summer approaches, most of us look forward to a warm and sunny weather with more outdoor activities and possibly a long awaited 'summer holiday' in an exotic location with plenty of sunshine. Most people feel excited as they are off work, kids are on vacation and lots of activities are planned in the coming months.

For 'Migraine sufferers', however, the start of a sunny and bright summer may in fact herald the onset of 'dark days ahead'. Summer holidays, immensely enjoyed by the rest of the 'non-migraine suffering' population, may be a period where migraine sufferers experience more migraines and often worry about it well in advance. Hot and humid conditions, more exercise and excursions as well as the worry and anxiety of getting a migraine during the summer holidays, may contribute to the increased frequency of migraine attacks during summer.

A Migraine is not just another 'headache' as many of us erroneously assume. It is much more as apart from the excruciating throbbing headache associated with nausea or vomiting, some migraine sufferers also have visual and sensory disturbance, which could be very worrying and alarming. Tiredness, lethargy and being oversensitive to light, odour and sounds are associated features of migraines. It may not only impact on the individuals suffering a 'migraine attack', but on those around them as well.



Advice to avoid and manage migraines during your summer holidays...

- Plan all the details of the summer holidays well in advance so that 'last minute rush' can be avoided . Set aside adequate time for packing and arrangements at work, as during the last few days, the tasks may seem endless. If travelling away on by plane, ferry or train, leave ample time for embarkation so stress levels are kept to a minimum.
- Travelling may be a nightmare for some migraines sufferers especially those undertaking a long flight, ferry or even a long journey by car. Take regular breaks, frequent meals and plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. Avoid coffee and alcohol during your journey. It is also important to have sufficient time to relax when you have reached your destination.
- During your holiday, avoid long durations in direct sunlight as this could increase risk of migraines. Remember to wear sun shades, hats and drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Regular meal times are also important for migraine sufferers, especially if they are involved in a lot of out-door activities. Dehydration, electrolyte imbalance, exhaustion and hypoglycaemia can trigger an attack of migraine. Taking some food and water with you on excursions to prevent the above, will help you avoid that worrisome 'aura'.
- Changes to sleep patterns while on holiday are an inevitable accompaniment of summer holidays and many migraine sufferers who travel abroad often worry about this. Changes in 'time zones' may be a problem for some and it is important to keep this in mind. Whilst such changes in time zones are unavoidable, trying to maintain some 'routine' to your sleep patterns during your holiday is entirely possible and is totally within your control. This may be helpful in reducing the 'trigger' of migraines.
- Whilst exercise is beneficial for migraines in general, over exertion may contribute to more frequent attacks of migraines .It is therefore a good idea to ensure a balance during your holiday and plan some relaxing activities, such as a spa treatment.
- Lastly, in the event that you are unlucky to get an attack of migraine during your well- deserved summer holiday, please make sure that you have consulted your GP

prior to your travel to obtain your medication. If you have your medication for migraine with you at all times during your travel, then, even if the need does arise, there is no panic trying to find medication, during an attack.

- Anxiety about having migraine may itself be a strong factor that triggers the development of migraines on your holiday. However, the chances of you **not** getting a Migraine during your summer holiday are always greater than you suffering one, so it is best to sit back, relax and enjoy your time away.

2. A Concert in Aid of The Clinic and in Memory of Dr. Nat Blau



Sunday 3rd July 2011 at 6pm
Venue: St Mary Brookfield, Dartmouth Park, London
NW5 1SL

Please support the Clinic and join us for an evening of music performed by the London Medical Orchestra.

The LMO was formed in 1954 with the main purpose of supporting medical charities through fund-raising concerts. Although the body of the orchestra is amateur, each of the string sections has a professional lead. Dr Nat Blau, late medical director at The City of London Migraine Clinic, played cello with the orchestra for many years, so we are particularly delighted to join with the LMO in this fund-raising event.



The orchestra will perform a programme of music from Offenbach's La Belle Helene, Tomlinson Folk Song Suite 1 and light music, including Axtell's Bobby Shaftoe. Further information about the London Medical Orchestra is available at: www.lmo.org.uk
We look forward to seeing you at 6pm on 3rd July!

Raffle Donations: At the LMO concert we hope to raise funds by holding a raffle but are in need of enticing prizes! If anyone has links with a business and can donate to us either vouchers (eg. a evening meal for two) or can send the clinic smaller prizes such as wine or chocolates, we would be greatly appreciative. If you are coming in for a consultation over the next couple of weeks, why not bring us those unopened Christmas presents lingering in the back of your cupboard!

3. Research

We are still recruiting volunteers to take part in our genetic study, whether you suffer from migraines or not. This involves just one visit to the clinic to complete a questionnaire and provide a saliva sample. We are still lacking women who don't have migraine, which is a vital part of the study, so please tell your friends and family if you think that they can help.

Contact Alison Frith, Clinical Research Sister research@migraineclinic.org.uk or 020 7251 8094 (direct line) to find out more about this project or to register your interest in our exciting forthcoming studies.

4. Thank you

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Migraine Action for their generous contribution of £3000 towards the cost of our new boiler. We really value their support, and it is encouraging to know that we are working together for a common cause.

5. Private Healthcare Coverage

Recently a number of patients have been asking whether their consultation can be covered by private insurance. In the majority of cases unfortunately companies do not cover our service as our staff are headache specialist doctors and not consultants and therefore do not appear on their official list. However it has come to our attention that patients are much more likely to be covered if they are referred to us by another healthcare professional, such as their GP. If you have healthcare cover, it may be worth investigating whether they will pay for your future appointments. This way we can charge a private rate and earn more money than we would through donations alone.

6. It's Not Too Late to Book For Summer Sun!

If you haven't yet booked your Summer holiday, why not visit one of our patients at their beautiful complex in rural Spain? They have offered us an unusual fund-raising opportunity so that if you mention the clinic when booking a holiday, we will receive 10% as a donation. The small resort named "Cantueso" is within easy reach of both Malaga and Grenada airports. There are ten picturesque holiday cottages nestling on a hillside overlooking Lake Vinuela complete with beautiful gardens, pool and an on-site Mediterranean restaurant.



Bookings can be made for any number of days, enabling travellers to take advantage of cheap mid-week flights and you can be sure of a sympathetic welcome from the owners - a family of migraine sufferers who are long-term supporters of the Clinic.

See <http://www.cantueso.net/wordpress/> for more information or call 0034 699 946 213.

For more information about the Clinic and it's services, or to book an appointment please visit www.migraineclinic.org.uk or call 0207 251 3322.