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Editor's message

R. MICHAEL GALLAGHER, DO

Headaches are a problem that continues to present significant challenges to physicians, patients, and families of the afflicted. Although major scientific breakthroughs in the understanding of headaches have been significant, patient treatment patterns have not kept pace according to a recent National Headache Foundation study, the American Migraine Study II (not yet published). Less than one half of all headache sufferers report ever having had their condition diagnosed by a physician, and nearly 60% continue to use over-the-counter medications.

Because of the great need, professional and lay organizations are accepting the challenge to educate both physicians and headache sufferers in order to ultimately bring effective treatment to the millions who are in need. Various patient and physician educational initiatives have been undertaken, including the recent US Headache Consortium practice guidelines, soon to be available to all. This consortium, which includes the American Osteopathic Association, assembled a multispecialty team to assist physicians in a primary care setting to make migraine management decisions. The consortium will establish guidelines for other headache syndromes in the future.

Although migraine-type headache, with its tremendous debilitation, continues to be the focus of the majority of attention, other headache types also remain a significant problem. In 1998, supplements to the February and May issues of JAOA were devoted to headache and its treatment. As follow-up, this supplement addresses the evolving treatment of migraine and other types, including cervicogenic-, psychogenic-, and otolaryngologic-related headaches. James R. Weintraub, DO; David M. Biondi, DO; Loretta Mueller, DO; and Mathew J. Cosenza, RPh, DO, bring their experience and knowledge to this supplement to assist osteopathic primary care physicians in the understanding of headache.

Dr Gallagher is Vice Dean of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey—School of Osteopathic Medicine, Stratford, NJ, and Director, University Headache Center, Moorestown, NJ.

Correspondence to R. Michael Gallagher, DO, Office of the Vice Dean, One Medical Center Dr, Suite 305, Stratford, NJ 08084-1504.

E-mail: gallagrm@umdnj.edu