Reviewer's report

Title: Traumatic-event headaches

Version: 1 Date: 10 May 2004

Reviewer: Dawn A Marcus

Reviewer's report:

General

This diverse series of patients is somewhat problematic in that it does not really meet the author's stated criterion of no head or whiplash injury. The 2 patients with loss of consciousness clearly should be considered as having a head injury. In addition, the injury to the face would also be considered, by most physicians, to be a head injury. Although the authors no no motor vehicle accident, the snow mobile accident with the vehicle hitting the tree would produce the same type of acceleration/deceleration injuries that one sees in minor MVAs. The same could be argued for the case of the man who falls over a beach chair & hits his chest on a rock - again, an acceleration/deceleration injury. Similarly, in the table, most cases represent acceleration/deceleration type injuries.

Therefore, it may be more accurate for the author to describe headaches similar to post-traumatic headaches occurring after more minor acceleration/deceleration injuries, with the absence of concussion. (Obviously those cases with concussion would need to be deleted. Neurological trauma after electrical injury is also well-known & does not seem to fit in with the other cases here.)

I would suggest a major re-write to focus on exclusively those cases of identified trauma (e.g., not work exposure or post-operative pain) and note the similarities between these headaches occurring within 14 days of incident and historical records or literature reports of IHS post-trauma headache that occurs following concussion. The authors might then successfully argue that the requirement of concussion/concussive symptoms is not necessary for the diagnosis of post-trauma headache and suggest the presence of an acceleration/deceleration injury alone might be adequate. In addition, table 2 should compare expected rates of "post-concussive" symptoms in post-traumatic headache patients from the literature (or from this doctor's own practice) with those symptoms in the subjects of the current study.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Spelling errors present. Please re-read & correct

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None