Reviewer's report

Title: Myofascial trigger points in cluster headache patients: a case series.

Version: 2 Date: 22 July 2008

Reviewer: Arnaud Fumal

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Major Comments

1. The authors should describe the theoretical basis underlying their pilot study. Why did they decide to screen for TrPs in cluster headache (CH) patients? In other terms, are there any arguments in favour of a peripheral and/or central sensitization in CH as the ones found in tension-type headache and migraine? To the best of my knowledge, very few studies were dedicated to this topic. Ashkenazi & Young (Headache 2004;44:1010-2) found some evidence of dynamic mechanical allodynia in CH patients (related to sensitization of neurons in the trigeminal nucleus caudalis). On the other hand, Ladda et al. (Cephalalgia 2006;26:1043-50) found no evidence for cutaneous allodynia during CH compared with in-bout and out-of-bout pain-free intervals.

2. Authors mention that they were able to perform an anaesthetic injection during the attack in 6 patients. In 5 out of 6 patients, the cluster was aborted. Crucial data are lacking about the mean duration of the attack and the precise timing of injection in the 6 patients!

3. About the prophylactic treatment, we are waiting for detailed clinical data: mean attack frequency before, during and after treatment. Moreover, the total number of injection’s sessions vary from 3 to 32! A more structured and strict protocol is requested. Finally, complementary pharmacological treatments (prophylactics) should be detailed.

Minor Comments

1. Authors stated that acupuncture seems effective in migraine prophylaxis. However, recent data suggest that needling points and other aspects considered relevant for traditional acupuncture are not relevant for treatment effect in migraine and that high levels of expectation with acupuncture may bias outcome. They should briefly discuss this topic.

2. About great occipital nerve blockade, they should add recent data about the efficacy of the occipital nerve stimulation (e.g. Magis et al. 2007; Burns et al. 2007, …).

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.