How Effective Is Your Migraine Medication?

New Survey Reveals Migraine Patients prescribed Unapproved Medications, Resulting In More Side Effects

(NAPS)—More than just a “headache,” migraines affect nearly 30 million Americans, about 10 percent of the U.S. population, according to the National Headache Foundation (NHF) and Harris Interactive, One in five Americans report that they have suffered a migraine headache, and those suffering from migraines also tend to experience more drug-related side effects than patients on approved medications.

The survey found that 20 percent of migraine patients are currently taking potentially addictive barbiturates or opioids to report that their medication works “extremely” or “very” well at relieving their migraine symptoms completely, with 42 percent of patients taking barbiturates or opioids. Patients taking medications not approved by the FDA to relieve migraines may not understand the full impact of side effects such as dependency, withdrawal, and addiction.

Physicians prescribing to the survey said that more of their patients taking opioids or barbiturates experience drug-related side effects such as drowsiness/dizziness, fatigue, confusion, forgetfulness and rebound headaches than those patients taking triptans. Physicians responding to the survey said that more of their patients taking opioids or barbiturates experience drug-related side effects such as drowsiness/dizziness, fatigue, confusion, forgetfulness and rebound headaches than their patients taking triptans.

“Medications containing opioids or barbiturates have the potential to produce drug dependence and addiction,” said Richard B. Lipton, M.D., professor and vice chair of neurology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City and director of the Montefiore Headache Center: “FDA-approved medications for migraine are specifically targeted at treating migraines and associated symptoms without producing these adverse side effects.”

The results of 502 patients and 201 primary care physicians and neurologists conducted earlier this year find that nearly 30 million Americans, or about 10 percent of the U.S. population, are suffering from migraines. Using NHF and Harris Interactive, one in five Americans report that they have suffered a migraine headache, and those suffering from migraines also tend to experience more drug-related side effects than patients on approved medications.

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