

# Perceptions of Migraine 2024

Research conducted for  
Migraine Australia

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# Summary of findings

Question set subject	Overall score (out of 100)
<b>Prevalence</b> Good awareness of gender, but people think it is less common than it is, and there is very little understanding of how migraine affects children.	36
<b>Cause</b> Most people with migraine have some understanding that migraine has a genetic component, but there is significant room for improvement, particularly in differentiating cause of the disease from triggers or cause of attacks.	56
<b>Experience</b> Better understanding is needed of what a typical migraine headache is, but otherwise a good appreciation of the complexity of migraine experiences.	63
<b>Treatments</b> People who do not live with migraine require increased general knowledge of treatments available for migraine to help combat stigma, awareness of triptans needs improvement, but otherwise acceptable results with pleasingly high support for going to hospital emergency for a severe attack.	56
<b>Disability</b> Great understanding of migraine as an invisible disability, but not as a sensory processing disorder. More work to do on migraine being incurable. Extremely low awareness of potential fatality.	46

# Perceptions of Prevalence

## Key insights:

- People do not understand how common migraine is. Even people who live with migraine significantly underestimate that number of people with migraine.
- People do not know how migraine affects young children, with very high 'don't know' responses from both people who live with migraine and who do not live with migraine to questions about youngest presentation and abdominal migraine.
- People do understand that migraine is a condition that predominantly affects women.

## Numbers

How many Australians do you think live with migraine?	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
Around 500,000 or less	14%	6%	10%
Between 500,000 and 1 million	27%	23%	25%
More than 1 but less than 4 million	30%	31%	31%
More than 4 million	7%	19%	14%
I'm not sure	22%	20%	21%

## Gendered

Is migraine more common among men or women?	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
25% male, 75% female	60%	80%	71%
50/50 evenly split	16%	5%	10%
75% male, 25% female	2%	2%	2%
I'm not sure	22%	13%	17%

## Abdominal migraine

Abdominal migraine is a subtype that is most commonly diagnosed in...	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Total
Children aged 5-10 years old	9%	44%	29%
Women aged between 30 and 50 years old	11%	10%	10%
Men over 70 years old	1%	0%	0%
I'm not sure	79%	46%	61%

## Youngest presentation

The youngest presentation of migraine is believed to be colic in babies.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	4%	13%	9%
False	13%	10%	12%
I'm not sure	83%	76%	79%

## Older presentation

Migraine stops once you get older, particularly over 75.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	6%	8%	7%
False	30%	52%	42%
I'm not sure	64%	40%	51%

# Perceptions of Cause

## Key insights:

- Understanding and perception of the cause of migraine as genetic needs some improvement, particularly in those who do not live with migraine.
- There is a good understanding that migraine is not psychological (or 'in our heads') and that exercise, as an example of a non-food trigger, can make migraine worse for some.
- A surprising percentage of people with migraine do not understand the role of triggers, with 23% believing nothing starts a migraine attack, they just happen. This has significant implications for migraine management.

## Genetic

Migraine is a complex genetic condition.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	32%	61%	48%
False	6%	8%	7%
I'm not sure	63%	31%	45%

## Underlying cause

People who live with migraine have some other underlying condition that causes it.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	11%	9%	10%
False	31%	56%	45%
I'm not sure	59%	35%	46%

## Psychological

The source of pain in migraine attacks is psychological, not physical.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	3%	3%	3%
False	70%	83%	77%
I'm not sure	26%	14%	20%

## Exercising

Can exercising make a migraine attack worse for some people?	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
Yes	43%	78%	63%
No	1%	2%	1%
I'm not sure	56%	20%	36%

## Triggers

What usually starts a migraine attack?	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
Any 'trigger' which over-stimulates the brain	34%	58%	47%
Glary or flashing lights	3%	3%	3%
Not drinking enough water	3%	3%	3%
Nothing - they just happen	24%	23%	23%
I'm not sure	37%	13%	24%

# Perceptions of Experience

## Key insights:

- People who do not live with migraine do not know what a typical migraine headache is, which in turn will contribute to under-diagnosis.
- There is good understanding that migraine isn't just a headache.
- There is low awareness of rare subtype symptoms and a poor understanding of aura, including amongst those who live with migraine.

### Typical migraine headache

The headache commonly associated with migraine attacks is usually on one side of the head and pulsating or throbbing.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	22%	69%	48%
False	13%	16%	15%
I'm not sure	66%	15%	37%

### No headache

If there is no headache, it is not migraine.	Does not live with m..	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	8%	2%	4%
False	45%	90%	70%
I'm not sure	47%	8%	25%

### Same symptoms

Migraine attacks have the same symptoms as other headache disorders.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	13%	12%	12%
False	50%	69%	61%
I'm not sure	37%	18%	27%

### Exercising

Can exercising make a migraine attack worse for some people?	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
Yes	43%	78%	63%
No	1%	2%	1%
I'm not sure	56%	20%	36%

### Duration of attack

How long does a typical migraine attack last for?	Does not live with migrai..	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
Minutes to hours	17%	10%	13%
Hours to several days	64%	77%	71%
Days to weeks	9%	11%	10%
I'm not sure	11%	2%	6%

# Perceptions of Treatment

## Key insights:

- More work is needed on increasing awareness of triptans and MOH, amongst people who live with migraine in particular.
- There is a high level of confusion about accessing CGRP medications, with most not receiving the message that GPs can initiate treatment.

### Acute relief

Can someone with migraine do anything to stop a migraine attack once it has started?	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
There is medication some people can take that will 'abort' the migraine attack	25%	57%	43%
They can relieve symptoms, but not stop the attack	47%	37%	41%
There is nothing that can be done	4%	1%	2%
I'm not sure	24%	6%	14%

### Triptans

What are Triptans?	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
A herbal supplement known to help with headaches	3%	0%	1%
A medication that is used to manage migraine attacks	33%	84%	62%
I don't know	65%	15%	37%

### Emergency

Can you go to emergency or acute care centre for help when you have a very severe migraine attack?	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
Yes	85%	89%	87%
No	1%	3%	2%
I'm not sure	14%	8%	11%

### MOH

Taking pain killers and other common medications frequently can make migraine worse.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	10%	51%	33%
False	22%	19%	20%
I'm not sure	68%	30%	47%

## Perceptions of Disability

### Key insights:

- People do accept migraine as a disability.
- People do not know migraine is a sensory processing disorder or that it can be fatal.
- People living with migraine know it is incurable, but the broader population does not.

### Disability

Migraine is an invisible disability.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	85%	93%	90%
False	5%	3%	4%
I'm not sure	10%	4%	7%

### No cure

There is no cure for migraine.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	33%	72%	55%
False	17%	6%	11%
I'm not sure	50%	22%	34%

### Sensory processing disorder

Migraine is a sensory processing disorder.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	19%	34%	28%
False	11%	19%	15%
I'm not sure	70%	47%	57%

### Fatal

You can die from migraine.	Does not live with migraine	Lives with migraine	Grand Total
True	10%	11%	11%
False	30%	45%	39%
I'm not sure	60%	43%	50%