

Fear of migraine destroys quality of life for men

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The unpredictability of symptoms and apprehension associated with living with migraine is limiting men's lives, according to research from Griffith University's Genomics Research Centre.

Although migraine is more common in women than men, about 6% of Australian men live with the debilitating neurological condition characterised by chronic headaches, sensitivity to light, visual symptoms and nausea.

Senior researcher Sharon Quinlan said the onset of migraine in males can be as early as eight years of age and many will have to manage the condition for life. There is currently no completely effective treatment or cure.

The research assessed quality of life in over 200 men with migraine compared to healthy men. Participants were average men managing their condition amidst jobs, family, and other commitments.

Physical functioning, energy levels, emotional wellbeing and general health were all poorer in men with migraine than those without.

"The reality is that if you have a migraine, you certainly can't perform at your peak and sometimes you can't perform at all," Ms Quinlan said.

She said the ability to study, play sport, work and even enjoy a social life could be compromised by migraine symptoms.

Not knowing when the next migraine could happen and the apprehension of having to deal with symptoms when migraine did strike, made it difficult for men to plan their lives.

As well as using medications to try and manage their symptoms, people often had to withdraw into a quiet, dark room to recover.

"Migraine isn't life-threatening and doesn't have the profile of many of those diseases, but it does limit people's lives and also affects family members' quality of life," Ms Quinlan said.

Source: Research Australia

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