Cervicogenic headache: an early description

Despite the controversies surrounding the clinical sources and pathological basis for cervicogenic headache, this term was used by, and often is attributed to, Otto Spaastad, \textsuperscript{1} although Barré and Riff had earlier described headache and vertigo, related to cervical arthritis, ascribed to stimulation of the vertebral nerve. \textsuperscript{2} However, an impressive, but little known description is found in the fourth of 18 lectures given between 1860 and 1862 on Rest and Pain, in John Hilton's classical text:\textsuperscript{3}

"Suppose a person to complain of pain upon the scalp, is it not very essential to know whether that pain is expressed by the fifth nerve or by the great or small occipital? Thus pain in the anterior and lateral part of the head, which are supplied by the fifth nerve, would suggest that the cause must be some-

where in the area of distribution of the other portions of the fifth nerve. So if the pain be expressed, the cause must assuredly be connected with the great or small occipital nerve, and in all probability depends on disease of the spine between the first and second cervical vertebrae."  

\textsuperscript{J M S PEARCE} 


\textsuperscript{3} Barré JA, Riff P. Le vertige qui fait entendre de Lermoyez: étude des fonctions vestibulaires à propos d'un cas typique, rôle possible de l'irritation du nerf vertébral par arthrite cervicale. Revue Oto-neuro-ophtalmologie 1926;4:498-501. 

Cervicogenic headache: an early description.

J M Pearce

J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry 1995 58: 698
doi: 10.1136/jnnp.58.6.698

Updated information and services can be found at:
http://jnnp.bmj.com/content/58/6/698.citation

These include:

Email alerting service
Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

Notes

To request permissions go to:
http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions

To order reprints go to:
http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform

To subscribe to BMJ go to:
http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/