

## Headache Disorders in the United States

- **Headache disorders affect a huge percentage of Americans.**
  - Headache disorders are the most prevalent neurological disorders, affecting more than 90% of all Americans.
  - Migraine afflicts approximately 36 million Americans annually, including 25 percent of middle-aged women and 19 percent of veterans of the Iraq war.
  - A quarter of American families contain someone with migraine.
  - Four percent of Americans experience headache pain more than four hours per day for more than 15 days per month.
  - Cluster headache is as prevalent as multiple sclerosis, and these attacks are among the most severe pain conditions known.
  
- **Headache disorders are among the most costly and disabling medical conditions.**
  - The US annual direct and indirect economic costs of headache disorders exceed \$31 billion.
  - Headache disorders are responsible for nine percent of all US lost labor productivity.
  - According to a World Health Organization analysis, migraine alone is responsible for at least one percent of the total US medical disability burden, and severe migraine attacks are as disabling as quadriplegia.
  
- **Migraine significantly increases the risks for other serious diseases.**
  - Greater than 1400 more US women with migraine with aura die annually from cardiovascular diseases compared to women who do not have migraine.
  - Based on a sample of Americans, suicide attempts are three times more likely in individuals with migraine with aura compared to those with no migraine, whether or not major depression is also present.
  
- **The NIH has never funded research on headache disorders at adequate levels.**
  - The NIH expended less than \$10 million in 2006 towards *all* research on headache disorders, comprising less than 0.05 percent of its total budget.
  - There is no NIH intramural research program on headache disorders.
  - There is no NIH study section for grant review wholly devoted to pain research, let alone headache disorders.
  - Migraine has very rarely been prioritized for NIH extramural research funding.
  
- **NIH inattention to headache disorders has discouraged scientists from pursuing research in this field and contributed to the limited development of new therapies.**
  - NIH under-funding has resulted in a very small community of active headache research scientists and few quality headache grants submitted for NIH funding.

Since seminal research studies leading to novel pharmaceutical therapies are typically performed in publicly funded laboratories, the meager development of innovative effective therapies for headache disorders can be traced to NIH underfunding.

**Under-funding of NIH research on headache disorders has denied millions of affected Americans equal access to the benefits of publicly funded research programs and the promise of effective headache care.**