

September 28, 2021

Women's Preventive Services Initiative
c/o American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Foundation
409 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20024-2188

RE: Public Comment on Well-Woman Visits (*submitted electronically*)

The American Headache Society (AHS) appreciates the opportunity to comment on recommendations for amending the WPSI Well-Woman Chart. In addition to the services that are currently recommended, AHS proposes that migraine be added as a screened condition.

For 60 plus years, AHS has been and continues to be the leading professional society of healthcare providers dedicated to the study and treatment of people living with migraine.

Migraine Disease Burden

According to the World Health Organization, migraine affects nearly 40 million Americans and is the 2nd most debilitating disease in the world.¹ It also disproportionately affects women by 75%² and remains one of the most underdiagnosed³ and undertreated conditions. Yet, it is so common affecting 1 in 5 women⁴. In recent years, a myriad of new treatment options have become available to treat migraine, emphasizing the urgency for diagnosis, treatment, and reduction of disease burden.

Undiagnosed Migraine Leads to Painful and Expensive Chronification

Undiagnosed and undertreated migraine leads to disease chronification and increased disability.⁵ Patients may initially have infrequent migraine attacks but, when undiagnosed and thus undertreated, progressively develop chronic migraine, defined as 15 or more headache days per months. This often results in emergency room care (patients with migraine are the 4th highest users of the ER⁶) including opioid treatment. Early diagnosis and treatment is therefore crucial to help prevent the chronification of disease; a simple and validated migraine screener exists called ID Migraine.⁷

Migraine Disease Strikes Women During Prime Childbearing and Wage Earning Years

According to ACOG, migraine is likely related to times of hormonal changes throughout the reproductive life cycle and the obstetrician–gynecologist is well positioned to recognize, diagnose, and treat the disease.⁸ The condition also peaks during a woman's prime working years (25 to 55 years of age). The consequent economic burden experienced by both employers and women in the workforce is substantial, with indirect and direct costs of migraine in the U.S. estimated at \$78 billion.⁹ At a time when women are leaving the workforce at alarming rates¹⁰, providing early migraine screening for such a prevalent and disabling disease will help retain women in the workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. AHS respectfully requests that you consider including migraine as a screened condition on the updated WPSI Well Woman Chart.

On behalf of the American Headache Society,

Peter Goadsby, MD, PhD, FAHS, AHS President

¹ Vos T, et al. Lancet 2017;390:1211–59

² Migraine facts. Migraine Research Foundation. <https://migraineresearchfoundation.org/about-migraine/migraine-facts/>. Published January 15, 2021. Accessed September 22, 2021.

³ Headache Disorders. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/headache-disorders>. Accessed September 22, 2021.

⁴ Burch R, et al. The prevalence and impact of migraine and severe headache in the United States: Updated age, sex, and socioeconomic-specific estimates from government health surveys. Headache. 2021 Jan;61(1):60-68.

⁵ Serrano D, et al. Acute treatment optimization in episodic and chronic migraine: results of the American Migraine Prevalence and Prevention (AMPP) Study. Headache. 2015 Apr;55(4):502-18.

⁶ Top Ten Reasons for Visits to the ER in the United States, available at: <https://hcaeastflorida.com/service/top-10-reasons-for-er-visits-in-the-us>

⁷ Lipton, R.B. et al. A self-administered screener for migraine in primary care: The ID Migraine™ validation study. Neurology Aug 2003, 61 (3) 375-382.

⁸ ACOG Green Journal, Migraine and Other Headache Disorders: Clinical Updates in Women's Health Care, July 2019; available at: <https://www.acog.org/clinical/journals-and-publications/clinical-updates/2019/07/migraine-and-other-headache-disorders>

⁹ Gooch C, Pracht E, Borenstein A. The burden of neurological disease in the United States: A summary report and call to action. Ann Neurol. 2017;81:479-484.

¹⁰ A Year of Strength and Loss: the pandemic, the economy, and the value of women's work, National Women's Law Center, Mar. 2021.