RED WINE TRIGGERS MIGRAINE?
MAYBE NOT, SAY BRAZILIAN HEADACHE SPECIALISTS

LOS ANGELES – June 20, 2012 – Contrary to conventional belief, red wine may not trigger a migraine attack most of the time in migraine sufferers, according to Brazilian researchers reporting this week at the 54th Annual Scientific Sessions of the American Headache Society. This is among many timely issues concerning headache, migraine, and brain injuries on the four-day agenda here which runs through Sunday morning, June 24.

Researchers from the Headache Center of Rio in Rio de Janeiro studied 40 self-identified regular wine drinker-patients with migraine who mentioned a clear-cut relationship between wine intake and their migraine attacks. All patients were evaluated by the same physician. Thirty-three patients (23 women, 10 men) completed the study, consuming four bottles within a minimum of four days. Among them, 29 patients (87.8%) referred a migraine attack in at least one time within 12 hours of having the wine. However, only 18 patients (54.5%) reported migraine attacks in at least two occasions in which the wine was consumed (among them, 7 had attacks in three occasions) and 11 (33.4%) reported migraine attacks in all four times in which the wine was taken. Four patients (12.2%) drank the four wine types and didn’t present any headache attack. 11 patients had 4 migraine attacks after taking the 4 bottles of wine; 7 patients had 3 migraine attacks after taking the 4 bottles; 11 patients had 2 migraine attacks after having the 4 bottles; 0 patients had only one migraine attack and 4 patients didn’t have any attack after the 4 bottles.

Comparing the trigger effect among the wine types in those patients who a migraine attack after taken the four wines, the Tannat and the Malbec were the varieties which triggered migraine more frequently (51.7% for Tannat and 48.2% for Malbec).

“Even among migraine sufferers who believe their migraines are triggered by red wine, a migraine attack didn’t happen most of the times they drank wine,” said Abouch V. Krymchantowski, MD PhD, of the Rio Headache Center and author of the study. “This was a small study so it is difficult to be statistically certain, but we formed the impression that the South American wine varieties Tannat and Malbec – those with more flavonoid content…” those with more flavonoid content – were most responsible for triggering attacks.

“It is possible,” said Dr. Krymchantowski, “that different varieties of red wines with different content of tannins and resveratrol can trigger migraine differently. More research is definitely needed to establish which varieties are most likely to trigger an attack.”
Some 500 of the world’s most eminent migraine and headache specialists are expected to attend the 2012 scientific meeting of the American Headache Society. This year’s theme, “Planting the Seed for Future Headache Research” will highlight other areas of current basic and clinical research such as the role of the brain cortex in migraine, the role of imaging in patients with headache, the latest breaking science emerging from the nation’s leading scientific laboratories in migraine research, and controversial issues in the diagnosis and management of complex headache disorders.

Migraine is one of the most ancient and mysterious of diseases with many myths and folklores attached to its diagnosis and treatment. Over the last 5,000 years, migraine sufferers subjected themselves to an array of extreme and bizarre treatments to find relief, noted Elizabeth Loder, MD, president of the American Headache Society. These have included drilling a hole in the skull to let out the “bad humours,” bloodletting, sorcery, binding a clay crocodile to the head, and inserting the bones of a vulture into the nose.

Some 36 million Americans suffer from migraine, more than have asthma or diabetes combined. An additional 6 million suffer from chronic migraine, where patients experience at least 15 headache days per month along with other disabling neurological symptoms. Migraine can be extremely disabling and costly - accounting for more than $20 billion each year in the United States. Costs are attributed to direct medical expenses (e.g. doctor visits, medications) and indirect expenses (e.g. missed work, lost productivity).

ABOUT THE AMERICAN HEADACHE SOCIETY
The American Headache Society (AHS) is a professional society of health care providers dedicated to the study and treatment of headache and face pain. The Society’s objectives are to promote the exchange of information and ideas concerning the causes and treatments of headache and related painful disorders. Educating physicians, health professionals and the public and encouraging scientific research are the primary functions of this organization. AHS activities include an annual scientific meeting, a comprehensive headache symposium, regional symposia for neurologists and family practice physicians, publication of the journal Headache and sponsorship of the AHS Committee for Headache Education (ACHE). www.americanheadachesociety.org

ABOUT THE AMERICAN MIGRAINE FOUNDATION
The American Migraine Foundation is a non-profit foundation supported by the American Headache Society and generous donors dedicated to the advancement of migraine research. The mission of this newly formed foundation is to support innovative research that will lead to improvement in the lives of those who suffer from migraine and other disabling headaches. (www.americanmigrainefoundation.org

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