Managing Chronic Migraines, Daily Headaches, and Fibromyalgia

by Dan Murphy, D.C

Reference:
Cerebrospinal Fluid [CSF] Glutamate Levels in Chronic Migraine
From: Cephalalgia, September 2004, Page 735
MFP Peres, E Zukerman, CA Senne Soares, EO Alonso, BFC Santos & MHW Faulhaber

Background Information from Dan Murphy

Glutamate (an amino acid) is the brain’s primary excitatory neurotransmitter. However, excess glutamate kills brain neurons and is, therefore, called an “excitotoxin.” Too much glutamate literally excites brain neurons to death. Glutamate is commonly added to foods, because it makes them “exciting” or taste better. Most of us know glutamate by its salt form, monosodium glutamate or MSG. There are dozens of names for glutamate as it is added to foods. A partial list of alternative names for glutamate can be found from the website www.truthinlabeling.org. The names include words such as autolyzed and hydrolyzed. The website notes that most, if not all, live virus vaccines contain MSG. [WOW!]

Aspartate acid, or aspartate (another amino acid) is the brain’s second prevalent excitatory neurotransmitter. Aspartate poses the same deleterious toxicity to brain neurons as does glutamate, and is, therefore, also labeled as an excitotoxin. Most of human exposure to aspartate is through the artificial sweetener aspartame. Aspartame is composed of the amino acids phenylalanine and aspartate. In the body, and sometimes in the food product when heated, the bond between phenylalanine and aspartate is broken, releasing the excitatory neurotransmitter and excitotoxin aspartate. Importantly and sadly, according to neurosurgeon Russell Blaylock’s 2002 book, Health and Nutrition Secrets that Can Save Your Life, phenylalanine and aspartate are not linked through a standard peptide bond but, rather, are linked with methyl alcohol (a deadly toxin itself). Consequently, ingestion of aspartame exposes our bodies to both aspartate and to methanol. Apparently, both glutamate and aspartate enter the brain through holes in the blood brain barrier at the hypothalamus, called the circumventricular organs. They, then, become factors in creating an array of symptoms, including chronic migraines (as noted in this article), and also accelerate neurodegenerative diseases. The key points from this article include:

• Elevated CSF glutamate and aspartate are linked to chronic migraine pathophysiology and to fibromyalgia.
• An acute increase in glutamate and aspartate levels can trigger a migraine attack.
• Increase in CSF glutamate levels is also seen in chronic daily headache patients.
• The head pain in migraine arises within the trigeminal system, which receives afferent input from the upper cervical spine. This is very important for upper cervical chiropractic.
• Acute migraine drugs increase CSF glutamate levels, increasing chances of chronic migraine suffering. [Amazing.]
• Magnesium blocks the glutamate receptor, reducing the excitotoxicity of glutamate. This is an important management tip. [Try 600 mg/day.]

This article would suggest management for chronic migraine, for chronic daily headache, and for fibromyalgia would include avoiding dietary glutamate and aspartate, taking supplemental magnesium, and using upper cervical chiropractic.

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