



## HEADACHES SOUND SO TRIVIAL, BUT THEY CAN BE DEBILITATING

**T**HE OLD joke "Not tonight, darling, I have a headache" has done the headache a great disservice because it underplays the seriousness of this affliction from which so many people suffer.

According to the Headache Clinic in Johannesburg, about 5 million South Africans suffer from migraines and 10 million suffer from other severe types of headaches.

It says migraines and severe headaches affect men and women across the racial, cultural and socio-economic spectrum, but women are more prone because of the hormone fluctuations during the menstrual cycle.

Many people are battling in silence with migraines and headaches and are self-medicating with daily doses of over-the-counter pills when they should be getting help.

"If you are taking regular painkillers such as Panado, Myprodol, Syndol (or any other brand) on a regular basis because of headaches or migraines, in other words three times a week or more, on an ongoing basis, then you have a problem and you need to seek help," says Dr Robbie Potenza, a family practitioner at the Wits University Donald Gordon Medical Centre in Parktown.

He explains that there are different types of headaches, including tension headaches, cluster headaches and migraines, with some patients experiencing a combination of these. "We have come a long way in the treatment of headaches and migraines but there is still much about them that is not understood."

This is why some people do not respond to any treatment. Nomabhele Tshangela, a process engineer who lives in Soweto, is such a person. Now 42 years old, she has suffered for 20 years with severe headaches and migraines that regularly last for two days.

"They started when I was at university and have never stopped. I have been to doctors, neurologists, surgeons and psychiatrists; I have had brain scans and spent a huge amount of money but they don't find anything," she says. "It is so stressful to have lived with this for so long and to have spent 70 percent of my life in pain without any hope of relief so far. It interferes with my work and my home life and it is so frustrating that I sometimes feel it is not worth living."

What makes Nomabhele's situation so difficult is that a wide range of triggers, including orange juice, any food or drink containing tartrazine, menstruation and perfume, can bring on severe headaches and migraines.

"If people around me are wearing strong perfume or aftershave, it will trigger a migraine. It's horrible because you can't tell people not to wear perfumes or aftershaves," says Nomabhele who knows a migraine is coming on when she gets a tingly, light-headed sensation and a bad, acidic feeling in her stomach.

With the onset of the migraine, she has to sit in a cool room with the curtains

*Most people who complain of them get little sympathy and support, and they aren't taken seriously enough by health professionals, researchers, employers and the government. But so many people suffer from headaches, and their effects can be crippling, writes Heather Dugmore*



**Nomabhele Tshangela, who lives in Soweto, has suffered for the past 20 years with headaches so severe that sometimes she feels that life isn't worth living.** PICTURE: JENNIFER BRUCE

closed. Severe vomiting follows.

"If I have to go home from work because of a migraine attack, a friend has to come and fetch me because I cannot drive at the time," she says.

She is now on nightly doses of Epilim (an anti-epilepsy drug that is often prescribed for migraines) and Trepeline (an anti-depressant that soothes nerve pain), which have helped to curb the headaches she would get in the middle of the night. "At least I don't wake up with these headaches anymore," she says.

Potenza suggests that she could be suffering from a combination of a migraine and cluster headache. Cluster headaches or histamine headaches are often an allergic reaction to anything from red wine and food preservatives to external factors such as perfume.

These differ from tension headaches, which can be equally bad but are usually to do with muscle spasm in the neck and back, and are often associated with tension and the stresses of life.

Migraines have a far more non-specific set of triggers and are brought on by the dilation of certain arteries in the head, which is why sufferers say it feels like their head is going to burst. Nausea, vomiting and light sensitivity accompanies the onset.

Migraine sufferers often say they know when a migraine is coming on because they will get what is known as a "migraine aura" – something that warns them the migraine is approaching, such as flashing lights in their head, a tingling sensation or the sudden appearance of a particular smell or taste.

"Various drugs such as Maxalt, which is a cerebral artery vasoconstrictor, are effectively used to abort the migraine in the aura phase, but if you miss the moment and the migraine sets in, it won't work," says Potenza, adding this is something that Nomabhele might want to investigate.

Once a migraine or severe headache has set in, doctors generally prescribe painkillers, anti-inflammatories and muscle relaxants.

The patient will often go to sleep on these and hopefully when they awaken the headache or migraine will be gone, but sometimes it hasn't, and can go on for days, explains Potenza, adding that, in certain cases, headaches and migraines may have a stress or psychological trigger. In this instance, counselling or

alternative forms of therapy such as hypnotherapy can be useful to reveal the underlying emotional trauma.

The Headache Clinic's Dr Elliot Shevel says the most of the migraine research over the past 40 years has centred on what is happening inside the brain. As a maxillofacial surgeon, he has an alternative theory – that the pain comes from outside the skull.

"I have found that the muscles around the head and neck and the arteries of the scalp, notably the external carotid artery that feeds the structures on the outside of the skull, are directly related to migraines," he says.

Shevel says that by cutting some of the superficial extracranial arteries of the scalp, he has successfully cured many patients' migraines. He says several surgeons worldwide have conducted the same procedure with equal success. He published his research on this approach earlier this year in *Headache*, the Journal of the American Headache Society.

Another procedure Shevel uses is a palate plate called a Posture Modifying Appliance (PMA), which adjusts the posture of the head on the spinal column. It is worn in the palate and it relaxes the muscles of the jaw and neck. He says that by reducing the tension in these areas, the muscle pain experienced by patients goes away and the artery pain simultaneously subsides. The PMA can be worn night and day, and while some patients are able to do away with it after a while, others cannot.

Nosizwe Waqu (39), a creditors controller at a private school who lives in Midrand, went to see Shevel in April 2006 suffering from "terrible headaches – on both sides of my head and at the base of the neck – that lasted for days".

She says: "I did see a GP, who said I had tension headaches and put me on anti-depressants and painkillers. They worked at first but the pain returned.

"When I went to Dr Shevel, he said my headaches were caused by an imbalance of my face and neck muscles because of my posture. He recommended the PMA and I've been using it since. It has worked wonders.

"I still get the occasional headaches but they are so much milder now and they only last for one to two hours. Most times when I start getting headaches again I know I must have my PMA adjusted at The Headache Clinic."

Fortunately her medical aid covered her R6 000 bill for the PMA and tests. If this isn't the case, the surgery or the PMA would be beyond most people's budget – without a guarantee of relief.

Regarding less expensive medical treatment or alternative therapies, Shevel says that he does not close himself to any kind of treatment if it works. "Physiotherapy helps, and we offer this at the clinic; massage also helps but it is temporary. My attitude is that if reflexology, naturopathy, reiki or any of the wide range of therapies offered work for you, then that is wonderful. The aim is to stop the headaches and migraines."

### SHOPPING FILE

#### RETAIL GROUPS TO GROW WITH SANDTON CITY



**An artist's impression of the Protea Court, a highlight of the Sandton City extension.**

TOP South African retailers have seized the opportunity to expand together with Sandton City, the centre says in a statement. They include Truworths, Foschini, Mr Price, Ackermans and Edgars.

The centre's expansion involves interior refurbishments and 30 000m<sup>2</sup> of new retail space. The R1.77 billion first phase is due to open in November.

Shoppers can expect: **Sterns and Sport Scene**, which currently trades at adjoining Nelson Mandela Square, will move into the current @Home space.

The Foschini group will enlarge **Markhams** and introduce a **Donna Claire** store.

**American Swiss** will grow to an 115m<sup>2</sup> sophisticated "black" concept store, as currently found in its Eastgate and Menlyn stores, the statement said.

The **Edgars** store will be enlarged by an extra 2 800m<sup>2</sup> to provide a massive 12 000m<sup>2</sup>, introducing a new studio shopping concept, new cosmetic brands and an extensive homeware section.

A "visually enhanced" **Jet** concept store will be re-introduced to Sandton City. **CNA** Sandton City will be revamped and focus on serving the gadget shopper.

**Ackermans** is introducing new design elements at its Sandton City store, with innovative green elements including energy efficient lighting and electrical systems.

Julie Hillary, General Manager Sandton Region, for Liberty Properties, said a further 58 retailers would join the Sandton City mix.

"We will be announcing our new retailers over the next few months, as we receive their consent to do so," she said.

In an earlier statement, Sandton City said that among the international fashion stores coming to the new extension was Spanish brand Zara.

Sandton City's entire retail space, including the extension, will total 143 690m<sup>2</sup> on completion of this phase. This will take the complex, which includes the hotel and office component, to a massive 215,000m<sup>2</sup>.

### A GUIDE TO THE MOST COMMON HEADACHES

CLUSTER HEADACHE	MIGRAINE	REBOUND HEADACHE	TENSION HEADACHE
<b>SYMPTOMS:</b> Excruciating knife-like pain centred around one eye, which can spread to other areas on the same side of the head; excessive sweating; redness or watering of the eye; runny or bunged-up nose; sometimes an eyelid droops; sufferers may feel agitated and unable to sit. <b>DURATION:</b> Each headache lasts between 15 minutes and three hours, but can be followed by others – up to eight attacks a day. This can last for six to eight weeks.	<b>SYMPTOMS:</b> Intense throbbing headache, typically on one side of the head; nausea and vomiting; increased sensitivity to light, sound and smell; temporary loss of vision; flashes of light; pins and needles; sometimes loss of speech in migraine with aura. Symptoms worsened by movement. <b>DURATION:</b> Four to 72 hours.	These are medication "withdrawal" headaches. <b>SYMPTOMS:</b> Oppressive headache with a foggy, heavy feeling. Usually worse first thing in the morning. May worsen when active. Noticeably worse when painkillers are no longer taken. <b>DURATION:</b> Constant.	<b>SYMPTOMS:</b> Mild or moderate pain with pressure – like a tight band – usually on both sides of the head. Muscle tenderness around the head, including the neck, jaw and scalp. Steady ache rather than throbbing pain. <b>DURATION:</b> A few hours.

– Daily Mail

**Can't get a contract? Try Bayport Cellular! LIMITED OFFER!**

**Nokia C3 plus Apple iPad 1**

**BOTH FOR ONLY R499 x 24 months**

**ONLY 175 AVAILABLE!**

to **32681** and a consultant will call you back

**Bayport Cellular**

APPLE IPAD 1 FEATURES:  
• STORAGE: 16GB  
• iOS 2.1  
• APP STORE  
• iTS 2.1  
• iBOOKS  
• iPHOTO  
• iMOVIE  
• iSTORE  
• iTV  
• iNEWS  
• iMUSIC  
• iBOOKS  
• iPHOTO  
• iMOVIE  
• iSTORE  
• iTV  
• iNEWS  
• iMUSIC

MAIN PHONE: NOKIA C3 INCLUDES VOICEMAIL TOP-UP WITH 500 AIRTIME PER MONTH. APPLE IPAD 1: 16 GB WITH DATA BUNDLE PACKAGE (1GB/MO FOR THE 1<sup>ST</sup> 12 MONTHS AND 1GB/MO FOR THE 2<sup>ND</sup> 12 MONTHS).

Delicare@bayport.co.za

**MBA** Master of Business Administration  
by supported distance learning

**MID-YEAR FINAL REGISTRATION**

- ✓ Highest Academic Standards
- ✓ Work-Based Assessments
- ✓ Internationally Recognised
- ✓ Tuition by Correspondence
- ✓ Workshops throughout Southern Africa
- ✓ Registered & Recognised
- ✓ Relevant & Affordable
- ✓ Flexible Payment Plans
- ✓ Learn While You Earn
- ✓ Online Support

**CHOOSE BETWEEN DISTANCE LEARNING OR PART-TIME TUITION**

**Entry requirements:**  
Degree, National Diploma or Equivalent Qualification. Mature students may also be considered on the basis of work experience and recognition of prior learning.

**MANCOSA**  
MANAGEMENT COLLEGE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA  
accredited | affordable | accessible

**DURBAN**  
Tel: +27 31 300 7200 / Fax: +27 31 300 7297  
Email: [mbsa@mancosa.co.za](mailto:mbsa@mancosa.co.za)

**JOHANNESBURG**  
Tel: +27 11 482 9852 / Fax: +27 11 482 9072  
Email: [mancosa@iafrica.com](mailto:mancosa@iafrica.com)

**CAPE TOWN**  
Tel: +27 21 685 9072 / Fax: +27 21 685 9067  
Email: [capetown@mancosa.co.za](mailto:capetown@mancosa.co.za)

Fully accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and Registered with the Department of Education (DOE). Registration No. 55884531908

**Purchasing Management**

**SHORT LEARNING PROGRAMMES FOR WORKING ADULTS**

**Duration:** Lectures are held once a week in the evening or on a Saturday morning over 15 weeks.

**Programme outline:**  
Supplier evaluation and selection • Managing quality and pricing • Inventory control • Negotiation, research and supply management • International purchasing • Purchasing capital equipment • Purchasing from small businesses • Legal aspects of purchasing • Purchasing strategy.

**Who should attend:**  
• Those who wish to enter the field of procurement as a career.  
• Those already in the field that have not had the benefit of formal training and wish to broaden their perspective.  
• Those who aspire to become purchasing managers.

**Certification:**  
The Purchasing Management Diploma is a short learning programme (SLP) that is certified by the Independent Institute of Education and endorsed by the Chartered Institute of Business Management (CIBM).

**Next programme starts:** Saturday 27 August (09.00-12.00) and/or Monday 29 August (18.00-21.00).

Contact: Sandton Campus - (011) 784 8958

**Varsity College**  
School of Business & Technology

Sandton / Pretoria / Westville / Durban North / PMS / Cape Town / PE

**INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION**

Varsity College is an educational brand of The Independent Institute of Education (IIE) which is registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training as a private higher and higher education and training institution under the Higher Education and Training Act, Act 96 of 1997 and the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 107 of 1997).