



Headaches warning sign for parents

BY EDWIN NAIDU

An international study that found a link between migraine and depression in children should encourage parents to listen attentively to their little ones when they complain about headaches, said Elliot Shevel, South Africa's migraine surgery pioneer.

He said it was vital that parents not dismiss headache complaints in children without proper investigation.

"Young children believe everything the parent says. If you tell your child 'You're just making this up', your child will believe you and start internalising self-blame for a medical condition over which he has no control. This has been shown to cause serious psychological and emotional problems for the child," Shevel said.

Shevel, the founder and medical director of The Headache Clinic, is a specialist in the treatment and prevention of headaches.

Earlier this week researchers at Nationwide Children's Hospital, in the United States, published new data that proves a link between children suffering from migraine and emotional disorders such as depression. According to the study, "children suffering from migraines are at risk of developing emotional and behavioural problems such as depression and anxiety."

Shevel said there was concern that children with migraine could be misdiagnosed as suffering from depression.