

Dear Lee,

I have done my best in trying to tell my story and describe my experience at the Headache Clinic in South Africa.

I started having migraines when I was 14 years old. I remember my first headache as a throbbing headache that lasted for about 2 hours; I had to take medication to ease the pain. I knew which tablets to take since my mother was also suffering from migraines. Since 14 until 35 I had headaches but they were rare - about once in 3 months. After the age of 30-35 my migraines have become more frequent - up to three times per week. From the age of 35 I had headaches every day and I took medication at least once a day and after a couple of years increased it three times a day.

Up to the age of 49 I have visited a lot of doctors regarding my headaches:

In Russia - they diagnosed an abnormal blood circulation in the head and treated me in accordance with this diagnosis: every 8 months I went to the hospital for a two week therapy which included intravenous solutions and injections several times a day. But after the treatment I did not feel any improvement. During this treatment I still had to take pain killers (Syndol) for the headaches because they persisted.

When I lived in the **UK**, I visited my GP (General Practitioner) for my headaches - he did not do any investigations but advised me not to take any tablets for 2 weeks and then come back to him. I did not visit him again since I could not stop taking my medication. I understood that nobody would be able to help me and that I had to deal with my problem myself. But time went and my migraines were becoming progressively worse - I was taking up to 15 tablets a day (including sleeping tablets up to twice a day - which helped to ease the pain). As a result, I never had any strength and felt very weak to do anything around the house or go out - I could not enjoy my life at all. I understood that I had to do something urgently as I could not go on living like this anymore.

I asked my son to do research on the internet (as I can't work on computer because my headaches became worse after looking at the PC screen) for specialized clinics who can deal with my headaches.

Other triggers for my headaches were strong smells, bright light, alcohol, loud noises, meat products (especially liver), hot weather, car journeys, changes in weather (atmospheric pressure), changes in sleep and eating habits. When we found the Headache Clinic in South Africa, I contacted Dr Shevel about my problems - I was pleasantly surprised with the quick response - he asked me detailed questions regarding my headaches. When I answered his questions he described to me in detail the type of treatment available and how they can help me.

I was a bit skeptical about this since I've lost confidence in doctors. That is why I sent more emails with questions and Dr Shevel answered all of them. I decided to go to South Africa (it was my last hope) with the thought that if they can't help me there then no one will be able to.

When I arrived in South Africa I went through a series of examinations and diagnostic procedures. But the most surprising thing was when Dr Shevel examined my head with his hands - pressing different points of arteries on my head.

As a result surgery was carried out - involving the muscles and arteries treatment through the incisions in the scalp of the head. I was able to leave the clinic the same day. The operation was successful and it has an immediate effect on my state of health. The migraines stopped straight away after the operation.

Since the operation the migraine triggers no longer affect me. For example, when I returned from South Africa (+15 C) to Cyprus (+37 C) I was expecting a bad headache as usual but I was pleasantly surprised when there was no headache at all.

During sandstorms here in Cyprus I also used to have terrible headaches but now they don't worry me anymore.

Every morning before the treatment I woke up with a headache and before breakfast I always used to take a couple of painkillers. Now I have stopped taking painkillers completely.

My quality of life has improved very significantly, I can do my work and I can enjoy time with my family, my psychological wellbeing has improved a lot – I've become more stable, calm and collected. I do NOT have any regrets about the treatment – I just wish I could have done it at an earlier point in my life. Anyone is interested in this case can contact me and I can share my experience. I am 49 years old and I currently live in Cyprus (Limassol City).

I would like to say a Big Thank You to Dr Shevel and all the wonderful team of staff at the Headache Clinic for their highly professional skills and for working together like a well-oiled clock mechanism. During my time at the clinic I was always taken good care and everything was explained to me in detail before any procedure. Dr Shevel and all the staff have shown great patience and have always been very kind and caring and I felt like a VIP there.

With Many Thanks and Kind Regards,

Tatiana Akritidou
(Limassol, Cyprus)