

28B. Interdisciplinary Approach to Chronic Headaches

Focus Areas: Experiential Workshop, Alleviating Pain

Amy Locke (1), Alicia Cohen (1), Howard Schubiner (2), Sahar Swidan (1), Grace Adams (3)

(1): University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, United States

(2): Providence Hospital, Pleasant Ridge, Michigan, United States

(3): Body Conscious Therapeutic Massage, Ann Arbor, Michigan, United States

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Chronic headaches are a common complaint, affecting millions of people worldwide. Underlying causes are varied, and many individuals suffer from multiple types of head pain, including migraines, tension headaches, and temporomandibular joint dysfunction. Many factors can affect pain intensity and frequency including dietary components, physical activity, stress, medications, and emotional events. Because of the varied causes, a single therapeutic approach is unlikely to be successful in treating the majority of patients. Conventional therapies often rely heavily on oral medication, which may provide insufficient pain control or be poorly tolerated.

This presentation will bring together a variety of alternative treatment options for chronic headaches. The foundations of health will be reviewed in the context of headache care, including a focus on dietary factors. The evidence basis for treatment with supplements, botanicals, hormonal intervention, and energy therapies will be addressed. We will look at available manual techniques with a focus on massage therapy. We will explore the diagnosis of mind-body pain syndrome and its overlap with chronic headaches. Commonly prescribed oral pain medication often results in intolerable side effects. We will discuss the options for topical application of these same pain medications with a much more favorable side effect profile. Participants will gain an understanding of how different types of providers can work together to provide optimal care to treat this common problem.

Contact: Amy Locke, alocke@umich.edu
