

Headache Research Report

Introduction

Headache is one of the most common problems observed in clinical practice. It constitutes a public health concern of enormous proportions, impacting both the suffering individual and society as a whole.

Apart from relatively rare instances of organic etiology (from obvious head injury or such), the basic cause of headache remains elusive. The primary classifications of headache used by modern clinicians and researchers (migraine, tension and cluster headaches) are all of unknown causation and incurable by medical standards. Treatment is usually directed toward symptomatic relief and prevention. The secondary forms of headache (resulting from some other illness) may be relieved or possibly eliminated if the primary condition is effectively treated. Yet, in such instances, the relation of the headache to the primary disorder is often poorly understood. Strictly speaking, the cause of most chronic illness is unknown. Furthermore, the practical reality is that many patients seeking help from a primary care provider present with a various nonspecific symptoms (such as headache) that does not fit easily into any diagnostic category. To simply label headache as primary or secondary, without understanding the basic etiology, pathophysiology and pathogenesis of the various forms of headache, leaves much to be desired.

About Edgar Cayce

The work of Edgar Cayce represents a valuable resource in understanding the various causes and manifestations of headache. Edgar Cayce (1877-1945) was an intuitive diagnostician who gave psychic dissertations that became known as “readings.” Although many of the early readings were not recorded, over 14,000 were stenographically transcribed and have been preserved by the Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.) in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Recognizing the need for confidentiality, each reading is assigned a number corresponding to the person or group requesting information. The identifying number is followed by another number designating the sequence of the reading. For example, a reading cited as 182-6 indicates that this reading is the sixth in a series of readings for an individual or group designated as 182. The case summaries in Appendix B also contain additional background information including the sex and age of the recipient and the date of each reading analyzed in this report. This is important because age and gender differences are relevant for some types of headache. Also, the date of the reading can be helpful to those interested in the evolution of Cayce's psychic ability.

Interestingly, Edgar Cayce also provides data for this report at another, more mundane level. Cayce was prone to headaches for much of his adult life. Digestive system problems and stress were cited as primary etiological factors for his headaches. Also, at the conclusion of some of the early readings, Cayce would awake from trance with a headache. When asked in the trance state how to remedy this problem, the conductor of the trances was given a script to be spoken at the conclusion of each reading. The script contained the hypnotic suggestion that Cayce would awaken feeling well without headache. The hypnotic suggestion worked. Readers interested in Cayce's personal struggle with headaches can study the case summaries indexed with the number 294.

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Numerous books have been written about Edgar Cayce. Readers unfamiliar with his life and philosophy will probably find it interesting and worthwhile to review some of these resources available from A.R.E. Press in Virginia Beach (see Appendix A).

About This Report

This report should be viewed in the context of a broad research model consisting of phases. This is the first phase wherein the primary focus is on scholarly research of the Cayce readings and related information (especially historical texts). This phase is essential because future clinical or basic science projects will draw upon the concepts derived from this initial review and analysis. It is impossible to do serious research into the Cayce health information without a clear and definitive understanding of what this body of information represents.

Previous studies also indicate that it is extremely helpful to look at Cayce's work in the context of historical and modern sources. The Cayce readings use the conceptual and technical language of the medical systems of his era, especially osteopathy. Therefore the various appendices containing excerpts from some of these historical texts provide a platform for considering the Cayce information.

In another sense, the modern medical literature can serve as a bridge between these historical sources (Cayce readings and historic texts) and modern practitioners who are interested in applying this information in a clinical setting. Thus the first sections of this report provide a selected literature review of the above sources leading to Section III which contains a protocol and algorithm for applying Cayce's ideas on headache in a clinical setting.