

Background

- Migraine, the second leading cause of global disability, significantly impacts all aspects of life, including mental health, sleep, social interactions, and work.
- Despite affecting over 5 million Canadians, migraine is a neurological disease that remains vastly underdiagnosed and inadequately treated, exacerbating both disability and societal burdens.

Methods

Quality of Life Survey: The Impact of an Invisible Disease

- Purpose:** To better understand how the lives of Canadians are emotionally, physically, socially, and professionally impacted by migraine.
- Methods:** A survey was conducted in September & October 2021, completed by 1,144 Canadians diagnosed with migraine.

Report Card: Access to Migraine Care & Treatment in Canada

- Purpose:** To give voice to the rising concerns of millions of Canadians living with migraine regarding the inadequate migraine care & treatment in the publicly funded health system.
- Methods:** (1) Compiling published research on migraine; (2) Conducting interviews with Canadian expert clinicians & patient advocates; and (3) Reviewing provincial formularies.

Evidence

Findings from the Quality of Life Survey and Report Card revealed:

1 The profound impact of migraine on the quality of life of Canadians.



2 Primary care providers (PCPs) are often the first point of contact for migraine patients, but many lack knowledge on migraine, causing treatment delays and frequent referrals to specialists.

"The biggest problem... is a lack of education for doctors. Doctors haven't really been taught how to deal with headache in medical school... and [the] patient suffers." (Family Physician)

- 45% first experienced **symptoms** between ages **10 and 19**, but **less than 30%** were **diagnosed before 19**.
- 69% received care from a PCP, but **only 23%** found their PCP **very knowledgeable** about migraine.
- 60% with chronic migraine were **forced to go to the emergency department** for migraine intervention.
- 78% of chronic migraine patients consulted **neurologists or headache specialists**, while others saw **psychologists** (28%), **physiotherapists** (43%), **massage therapists** (68%), & **chiropractors** (57%).

3 A shortage of neurologists & headache specialists, creating long wait times & hindering access to necessary care.

	AB	BC	ON	QC	SK	NB	MB	NL	NS	PEI	TERR
# of neurologists	151	141	380	311	22	8	28	13	24	2	0
# of neurologists per 100k people	3.5	2.8	2.6	3.7	1.9	1.0	2.1	2.5	2.5	1.3	0

There are 1,080 neurologists in Canada, but **not all treat migraine**.

Conclusion: Action Must Be Taken!

- 1 Increase Education for Primary Care Providers (PCPs):** Given the high prevalence of migraine and limited access to specialists, it is essential to improve PCPs' education in migraine diagnosis and treatment to improve management at the primary care level.
- 2 Integrate Allied Health Professionals in Migraine Care:** Recognize the importance of allied health professionals such as psychologists, chiropractors, massage therapists, and physiotherapists in migraine management, and promote a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates their expertise.
- 3 Adopt a Multidisciplinary Strategy:** Implement a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach to migraine care, fostering collaboration across healthcare disciplines to better meet the complex needs of migraine patients and reduce the burden of this debilitating condition on individuals and society.