

PAIN CHARTS AND DIAGRAMS

Pains caused by disturbance of the second cervical root begin in the suboccipital area, radiating upward toward the [top of the head] and forward behind the [same-side] eye. The patient often feels as if the eyeball is being torn from the socket. The headaches are migraine-like and often associated with nausea, vomiting and blurred vision.

—E Seletz, M. D. (1958)

It is rare for headache patients to actually diagram their pain or for physicians to have them do so. This may be due to the notion that a headache is a headache and whatever it is, it is just *one thing*. That is not the case.

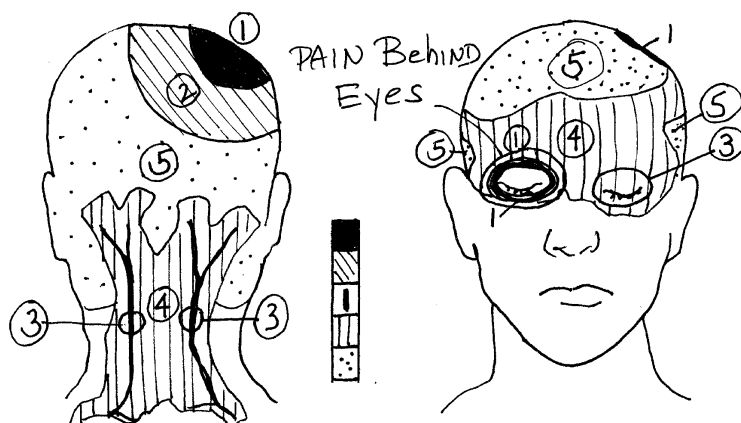
Migraines can progress to full-body pain but they *never* start that way. Where the pain actually starts and how it progresses is extremely valuable information.

When asked about origin and location, limiting answers to “It Hurts Everywhere” isn’t useful and at some time it wasn’t true. Find the point where your headaches start; put one finger on it if necessary. If it is a vague, hard-to-localize pain deep inside your head, you can still indicate right or left, front or back. Track the pain from here to *everywhere* that symptoms appear.

Everywhere. Really. If your headache comes with tingly arms and fingers, show where you feel the tingling and in exactly which fingers (fronts or backs). If it hurts right down to your teeth, *which* teeth? If it comes with abdominal cramps and back pain, is it upper, lower, right or left?

Patients often omit critical information for fear of being seen as “crazy.” Being a good observer, the ability to notice pain in a shoulder or calf or running down the thumb has nothing to do with “crazy.” It is data, it just “is” and usually there is a reason for it.

Compare the quote above (by a Dr. Seletz in 1958) with the pain diagram in Figure 5. There was a time when pain reported in the neck would eliminate a diagnosis of migraine in favor of “tension headache” and a referral for psychiatric counseling. But nerves in the back of the neck will eventually talk to the trigeminal nerves which are credited with the symptoms of “true” migraine.



Patient diagram showing beginning and final ("all over") pain — and clues to the source.

Figure 5. PROGRESSION OF HEADACHE PAIN

Blocked nerves and blood vessels in neck and shoulder cause the back, arm, hand, and finger pain known as Thoracic Outlet Syndrome. Similar pain is often diagnosed as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome although the carpal tunnel may have nothing to do with it. Arms may "go to sleep" at night (more than you do) but a first sign of outlet problems is often relentless, intractable migraine. Crampy calves, heel and pelvic pain may also signal reduced blood flow in the lower body.

These are important clues. Don't leave them out.

You can also draw the *nature* of the experience. What do you see during an attack? What is the quality of the pain? How does it make you *feel*?

Drawing the migraine was once thought to be an interesting "artsy" thing to do, but this is not a trivial exercise. If nothing else, it is at least an antidote to common migraine images which tend to feature lovely young female models with perfect hair and perfect makeup, delicately touching fingertips to temples.

Images from The Migraine Art Project are not pretty. They are horrifying depictions of pain, frustration, and despair. They have also revealed a wealth of neurological information, and, for both migraineurs and Normals, a window of insight into the migraine brain. See images at: www.migraine-aura.org.