Elias A Zerhouni, MD,
Director, National Institutes of Health,
Office of the Director,
National Institutes of Health (NIH),
9000 Rockville Pike,
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USA

2 September 2007.

Dear Dr. Zerhouni,

World Headache Alliance (WHA) together with its lay member organizations in different parts of the world is pleased to endorse the call to the National Institutes of Health to give consideration to funding towards headache research and hence to participate in the efforts to reduce the personal, societal and economic burden headache disorders cause to people affected by them.

Through its ten year history WHA has received message from our membership worldwide that headache disorders are not recognized and respected, and therefore there are barriers to appropriate care and relief. To individuals affected by headaches they may cause lost opportunities in education and in career, and subsequently economic consequences, not to mention immeasurable burden related to family, friendships and social life due to the headache disability. In the World Health Report 2001 World Health Organization recognized this of migraine alone: it is among the 20 leading causes of disability worldwide.

However, headache disorders, their care, medication and training of healthcare professionals remains a low priority as long as required funding is not directed to headache research.
People affected by headache disorders are the ultimate beneficiaries of the work that is done through research. For them it is important to know the underlying biological mechanisms of their disorders, receive better medication, have access to treatment with doctors who are interested in headache and know about headache. When all this is based on scientific research and evidence we can expect better outcomes for the management of headaches and benefits for the systems delivering healthcare.

WHA believes that as one of the leading research institutions NIH will be able to bring benefits to people affected by headache in all parts of the world through its links in the international scientific community. The call to NIH to invest to the future headache research will meet many needs of the vast population of people with headache.

Yours sincerely,

Hilkka Kettinen
Chairman of Council
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