

# NIH HEAL Initiative Must Focus on Headache Disorders to Reduce Disease Burden and Opioid Prescribing

- *The extraordinary burden of headache disorders.*

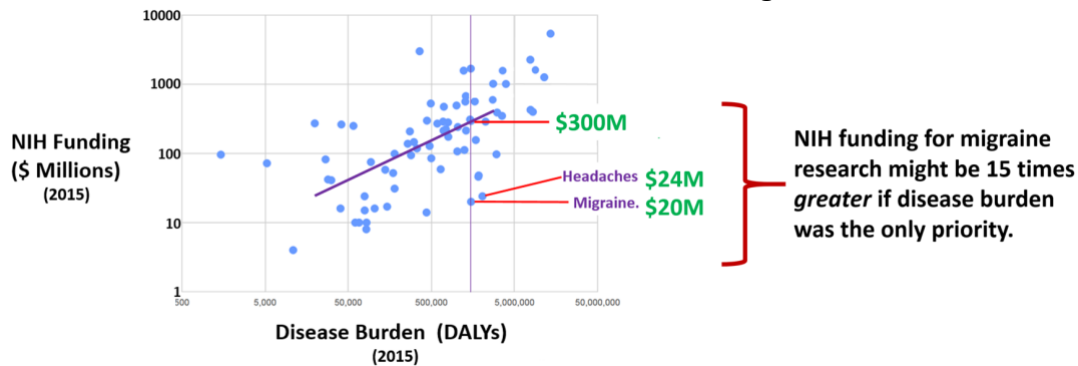
- Migraine is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of US disability <sup>1</sup>, and 60 million Americans have migraine <sup>2</sup>.
- Cluster headache is widely reputed to be the most severe pain that humans can experience<sup>3</sup>.

- *There is a critical need for more effective and safer treatments for headache disorders.*

- Opioid use can *worsen* migraine frequency and severity for some people <sup>4</sup>.
- Evidence-based guidelines uniformly recommend *avoiding* opioids for headache disorders.
- Yet, 10% of Americans with migraine are active opioid users <sup>5</sup>, and 59% receive opioids in US EDs <sup>6</sup>.

- *NIH has neglected research on headache disorders.*

- Headache disorders are the *least* funded NIH research area among the *most* burdensome diseases <sup>7,8</sup>:



- NIH has failed to prioritize programs for headache disorders research...
- ...despite 17 Appropriations Report Language statements “strongly” urging NIH to do so since FY09 <sup>9</sup>.

- *Furthermore, statutory authority for the HEAL Initiative [42 U.S. Code § 284q–1] calls for disease burden to be a “crucial consideration” in prioritizing these research programs.*

- Yet, < 1% of grants funded under HEAL have been for headache disorders research <sup>10</sup>.

**Please send suggested LHHS FY2022 Appropriations letter requesting a \$50,000,000 line item for headache disorders research from FY2022 HEAL appropriations.**



Alliance for  
Headache  
Disorders  
Advocacy

Alliance for Patient Access  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Headache Society  
CHAMP  
Chronic Migraine Awareness  
Clusterbusters  
Cluster Headache Support Group

Headache Cooperative of New England  
Headache Cooperative of the Pacific  
Migraine Research Foundation  
Miles for Migraine  
National Headache Foundation  
Southern Headache Society  
Spinal CSF Leak Foundation

## Citations:

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8. <https://report.nih.gov/funding/categorical-spending#/>
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