

## PRIMARY HEADACHES AND LEARNING DISABILITIES IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

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**Background:** Primary headaches, mostly Migraine (M) and Tension-Type headache (TTH), and Learning Disabilities (LDs) are both common among children and adolescents.

**Aim:** The purpose of the study was to assess: 1) the relationship between primary headaches and Learning Disabilities; 2) their influence on the quality of life, like the inhibition of the activity of study and, mostly, school absences; 3) the presence of psychopathologies.

**Methods:** A group of children and adolescents 8-18 years, with diagnosis of primary headaches, were compared to a group with primary headaches+LDs, at Headache Center of L'Aquila-Neuropsychiatric Clinic, San Salvatore Hospital-University of L'Aquila. Diagnosis of headache: criteria of ICHD-3 (2013 and 2018). Diagnosis of LDs: 1° and 2° level batteries (Cornoldi and Tressoldi). Psychopathology disorders: CBCL 6/18 and SAFA test (Achenbach, 2001; Cianchetti and Sannio Fancello, 2001). Statistical analysis: ANOVA.

**Results:** 193 patients, 156 (46.15% M, 53.85% F) with primary headache (episodic and chronic) and 37 with LDs (56.76% M, 24% F). The sample was divided in three groups → Group 1: only primary headache (122 pts); Group 2: only LDs (37 pts); Group 3: primary headache + LDs (34 pts).

- The prevalence of LDs is higher in patients with headache (9.44%) than in the general population (3.2%)(**Fig.1**);
- Among subjects with headache + LDs the prevalence of psychopathology disorders (anxiety disorders) prevails with statistical significance compared to patients with only headache ( $p = 0.0500$ )(**Fig 2**);
- 50% of patients with TTH + LDs say they are often absent from school, while patients with tension type headaches, in absence of comorbidities with LDs, record less school absences (22%)(**Fig 3**);
- The headache associated with LDs represents a true comorbidity and not a consequence, because the headache persists once LDs are diagnosed.

**Discussion:** The data of the present research show us how, sometimes, a child who requires help for headache has already an emotional experience of years of school weighed down by learning disorders and the headache represents an epiphenomenon of a school and social discomfort, conditioning the lifestyle of the little patient.

**Conclusion:** The LDs can represent a cause of chronic headache so, for us, it is crucial to make an early diagnose of LDs in patients with headache to prevent the worsening of the headache and quality of life.

### REFERENCES:

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3. Genizi J, Matar AK, et al. **Pediatric mixed headache -The relationship between migraine, tension-type headache and learning disabilities - in a clinic-based sample.** J Headache Pain 2016;17:42.

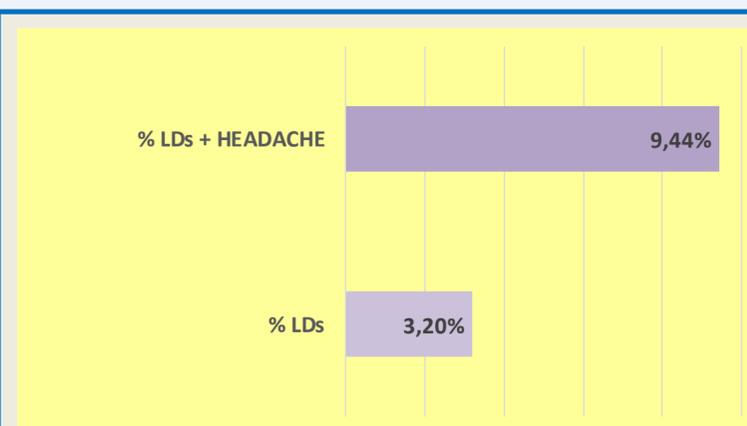


FIG 1: LEARNING DISABILITES (LDs) IN THE SAMPLE

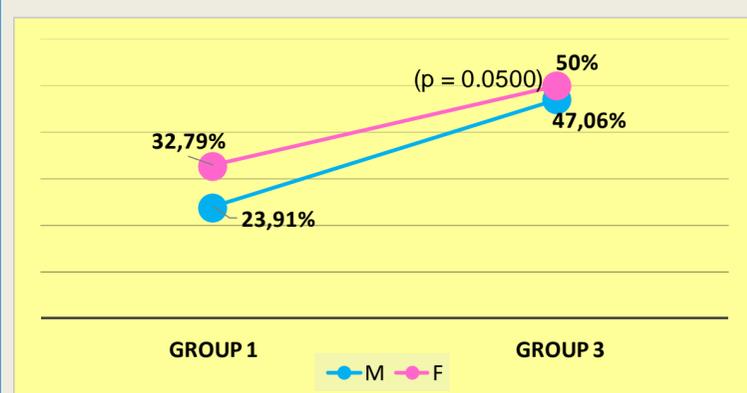


FIG 2: ANXIETY DISORDERS GROUP 1 Vs GROUP 3

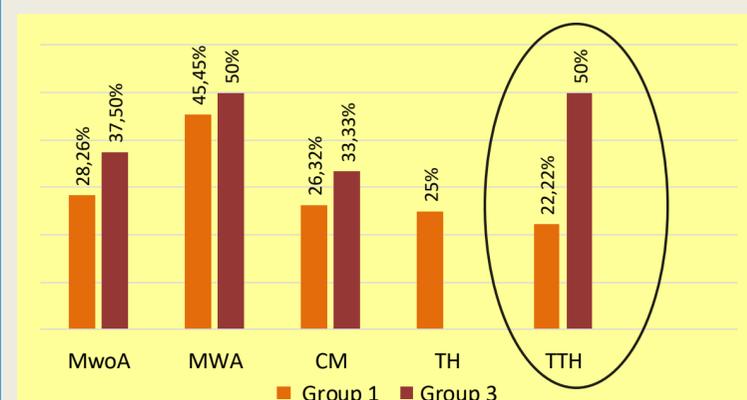


FIG 3: SCHOOL ABSENCES ACCORDING TO DIAGNOSIS