MIGRAINE WORLD SUMMIT

2020 INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

Topic	Why Most Doctors Get the Diagnosis Wrong	Title & Organisation	Chief of Headache Medicine & Headache Specialist, *Stanford University*
Speaker	Robert Cowan, MD		

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Many people do not go to the doctor for migraine, partly because of the stigma interfering with it being considered a "real" disease
- People with episodic migraine don't necessarily have to explore additional care if their medication is working, but they do need to be aware of migraine becoming chronic
- There are many types of migraine, and medications work differently in individuals; both of which add to the difficulty of diagnosis
- Migraine is most commonly misdiagnosed as sinus headache
- The average person will see three to five doctors before seeing a headache specialist
- General physicians and even neurologists have very little training in headache and can be influenced by pharma, leading to the risks of misdiagnosis and underdiagnosis
- Researchers are beginning to use AI to collect migraine data and establish patterns, which can be helpful in both diagnosis and proper treatment

TREATMENTS MENTIONED

Topiramate

Ajovy

QUOTES

"One of the challenges we have is getting better at diagnosing within the diagnosis, understanding those subgroups of people with episodic migraine who are going to do well with behavioral therapy or going to do well with medicine A or medicine B."

"There are 60 million people in this country with headache and every one of them is unique."

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Doctors need to get more education in and better at diagnosing migraine and its subgroups
- Taking control of your own health as a patient can be more helpful than any one medication
- Be aware of how much medication you're taking and understand that overuse can exacerbate migraine; lifestyle issues must also be addressed.
- Consider completing an online questionnaire at BonTriage.com to get an assessment to take to your doctor to help with diagnosis

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