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# Inflammation May Play Significant Role in Migraine in Women

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Migraine diagnosis is associated with elevated high sensitivity C-reactive protein (hsCRP), a marker of inflammation, in young adults. The relationship, particularly apparent in young women, may play a role in migraine pathogenesis.

hsCRP is a known risk factor for cardiovascular events, however its link to migraine has been inconsistent. For this study, presented at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the American Headache Society in San Diego, CA, Gretchen Tietjen, MD, of the University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences, and colleagues analyzed data from 9269 adults aged 24-32 years from the Add Health Study.

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Eleven percent (n= 1049) of participants reported a migraine diagnosis. Those with migraine had significantly higher hsCRP levels compared to participants without migraine, with women having higher mean levels than males (though the difference was only significant in males [males:  $3.64 \pm 6.32$  vs  $3.05 \pm 5.25$ ,  $P = .03$ ; females:  $6.26 \pm 9.78$  vs  $5.75 \pm 8.97$ ,  $P = .08$ ]). After controlling for confounding variables including sociodemographics, BMI, infections, current pregnancies, subclinical symptoms, anxiety, and depression, migraine was found to be significantly associated with  $\ln(\text{hsCRP})$  in both the entire sample ( $r = .11$ : increase in CRP of 11% if person has migraine;  $P = .04$ ) and in females ( $r = .17$ : increase in CRP of 17% if person has migraine;  $P = .01$ ), but not in males ( $r = .01$ ;  $P = .94$ ).

“This study shows a positive correlation between migraine diagnosis and elevated hsCRP, especially among young women, the segment of the population with the highest migraine-stroke connection,” Dr Tietjen said in a statement. “These findings may help inform potential treatment options for those suffering from migraine, both to prevent migraine and also future stroke and heart disease. There is limited evidence that anti-inflammatories prevent migraine with aura, but there is still more research to be done on migraines with aura vs migraines without aura,” she added.

*For more coverage of AHS 2016, go here.*

## Reference

Tietjen GE, et al. CRP and Migraine in Young Adults – Results from the Add Health Study. Presented at: 2016 American Headache Society Annual Meeting. June 9-12, 2016; San Diego, CA.

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