Wine and headache

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“Wine could be a trigger for migraine”.

The earliest reference to alcohol-provoked migraine can be found in the work of Celsus (25 B.C.–50 A.D.)

Who wrote “the pain...is contracted...by drinking wine”

And more than six centuries later Paul of Aegina (625–690 A.D.) also included drinking of wine as the triggering factor of migraine.
Alcohol as a trigger factor

Many studies in different countries show that alcohol is a headache trigger in high percentage both of migraine subjects and in general population.

About one-third of the patients (mean 34%) report alcohol as a trigger.

Is alcohol per se or another component of alcoholic drinks the headache trigger?

Red wine was considered the main cause after the fundamental study of Littlewood et al. showing that 300 ml of red wine and not vodka with an equivalent alcohol content provoked headache in red wine-sensitive-migraine patients and not in non-sensitive migraine-patients or controls.

Red wine headache ("RWH")

is a headache often accompanied by nausea and flushing that occurs in many people after drinking even a single glass of red wine.

This syndrome can sometimes develop within 15 minutes of consumption of the wine.

What are the main reasons for the RWH?
Wine can induce headache in patients suffering from histamine intolerance.

Red wine usually contains up to 20- to 200-fold more histamine than white wine.

The other symptoms such as facial flushing, rhinoconjunctival symptoms, asthma, urticaria, pruritus, hypotension, arrhythmia, and diarrhoea are unlikely to be present in the attacks of migraine induced by wine.

Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (Feb 2001), found no difference in reactions to low and high histamine wines.

Taking loratadine (Claritin) an hour before drinking.
Tannins

- Tannins are the flavonoids in wine that give its degree of mouth drying bitterness.
- Tannin is a chemical substance that comes from grape skins, stems and seeds.
- The skins also impart color to wine which is why red wines typically have a lot more tannin than whites.
- Wines can also take on tannins from the oak or other woods used in wine barrels for storage. Different woods in different countries affect the type of tannins in the wine.
Tannins

Less tannin content

- Pinot noir
- Sangiovese
- Gamay
- Temranillo
- Dolcetto
- Barbera
- French reds from Burgundy
- Spanish Riojas

More tannin content

- French reds from Bordeaux
- Italian Barolo and Barbaresco
- Syrah (Shiraz)
- Cabernet Sauvignon
Tannins

Lower tannic wine bottles

Higher tannic wine bottles
Prostaglandins

- Red wine headache can be caused by the release of prostaglandins which some people are not able to metabolize.

- Ibuprofen, paracetamol and aspirin are PG inhibitors and some people get good results taking a dose of an inhibitor an hour before consuming red wine.
Conclusion

- Various retrospective studies show that a high percentage (1/3) of migraine patients refer alcohol as a trigger factor.

- No significant differences appeared between the migraines with or without aura and between migraine and tension headache

- Studies concerning red wine as a principal trigger of migraine in susceptible migraine patients, has led others to perform various studies to identify a substance contained in red wine, but not in other alcoholic drinks

- Experiments with wine are extremely difficult to undertake. The wine composition is affected by many variables: bio-climatic, ecological methods, stabilizing process, ageing, cultivation etc. Therefore a major objective is to perform a study in order to show if it is alcohol per se which provokes migraine and tension headache in susceptible and non susceptible migraine patients

- Red wine will trigger migraine attack in sensitive patients and that all forms of alcohol can provoke headache.
3 Tricks to Remedy a Wine Headache

• Drink a Glass of Water With Every Glass of Wine
• Take “Two” Aspirin Before Drinking
• Don’t Eat Sugary Things with Wine
Kippis!
Egészségedre!
¡sveikatą!
Skål!
Proost!
За здраво́й'е!
Priekā!
Cheers!
Terviseks!