

Migraine, tension headaches and irritable bowel syndrome linked?

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Migraine and tension-type headaches may share genetic links with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), according to a preliminary study released today that will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 68th Annual Meeting in Vancouver, Canada, April 15 to 21, 2016.

Irritable bowel syndrome is the most common gastrointestinal disorder worldwide and affects up to 45 million people in the United States. Many people remain undiagnosed and the exact cause of the chronic condition is not known. Common symptoms include abdominal pain or cramping, a bloated feeling, gas and diarrhea or constipation.

"Since headache and [irritable bowel syndrome](#) are such common conditions, and causes for both are unknown, discovering a possible link that could shed light on shared genetics of the conditions is encouraging," said study author Derya Uluduz, MD, of Istanbul University in Turkey.

The study involved 107 people with episodic migraine, 53 with tension-type headache, 107 people with IBS and 53 healthy people. Migraine and tension headache participants were examined for IBS symptoms and participants with IBS were asked about headaches.

People with migraine were twice as likely to also have IBS as people with tension headache. A total of 54 percent of those with migraine also had IBS, compared to 28 percent of those with tension headache. Of the

participants with IBS, 38 also had migraine and 24 also had tension headache.

When researchers looked at the [serotonin transporter gene](#) and the serotonin receptor 2A gene, they found that the IBS, [migraine](#) and tension headache groups had at least one gene that differed from the genes of the healthy participants.

"Further studies are needed to explore this possible link," said Uluduz. "Discovering shared genes may lead to more future treatment strategies for these chronic conditions."

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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