



# Hemicrania Continua

## Overview

Hemicrania continua is an uncommon disorder with estimated prevalence of 0.8-1.5%

The disorder seems to be more common in women.

Mean age of onset is between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> decade

## Symptoms

Hemicrania continua is characterised by strictly one sided pain in the head of moderate severity with ipsilateral autonomic features which may be more prominent during exacerbations.

Hemicrania continua has both clinical and physiological overlap with migraine.

Thus, although more than half of people can feel restless during the attacks, others experience motion sensitivity

### **Treatment**

By definition hemicrania continua is an indomethacin-responsive disorder.

Most people show a rapid response to indomethacin though some people can take up to a week to demonstrate a response to an effective dose.

Dose requirements can change over time and some people may go into remission.

Therefore, once symptoms are well controlled for a period of time gradual dose reduction should be tried to maintain the lowest effective dose or, if there is no recurrence on each dose reduction, withdrawal during remission periods.

It is important to be aware that gastrointestinal side effects with indomethacin are common and may preclude use of the drug. A stomach protecting drug (proton-pump blocker or H2-antagonist may be used)

Medication overuse can occur in hemicrania continua. Thus, analgesics should be withdrawn prior to assessing response to indomethacin.