

Migraine and Tension-Type Headache among Children and Adolescents–

Application of International headache Society criteria in a clinical setting

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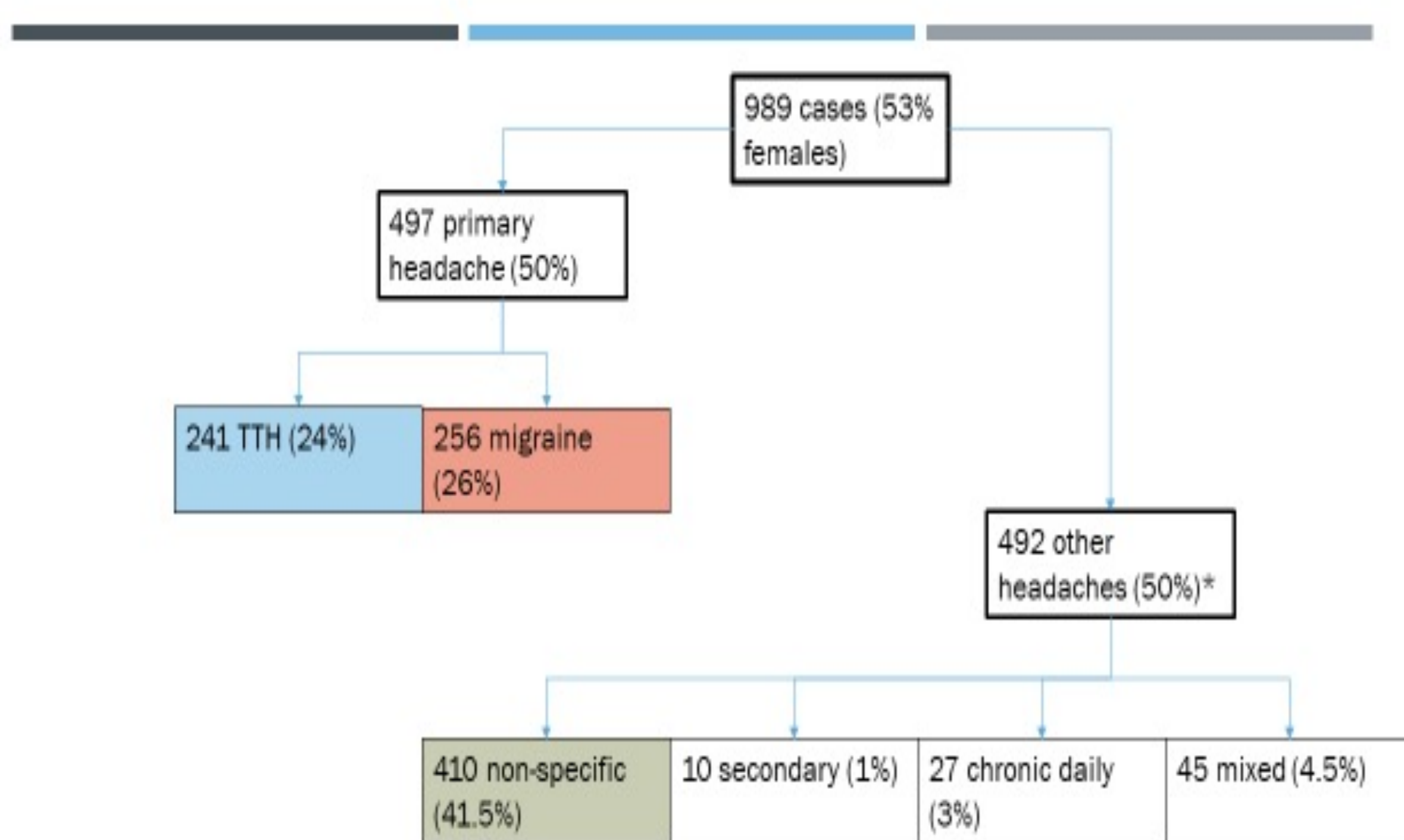


INTRODUCTION

The International Headache criteria were written in order to help physicians establish a headache diagnosis. However, sometimes children with headache do not seem to fit any diagnosis. The purpose of our study was to assess the application of the criteria in a clinical setting.

METHODS

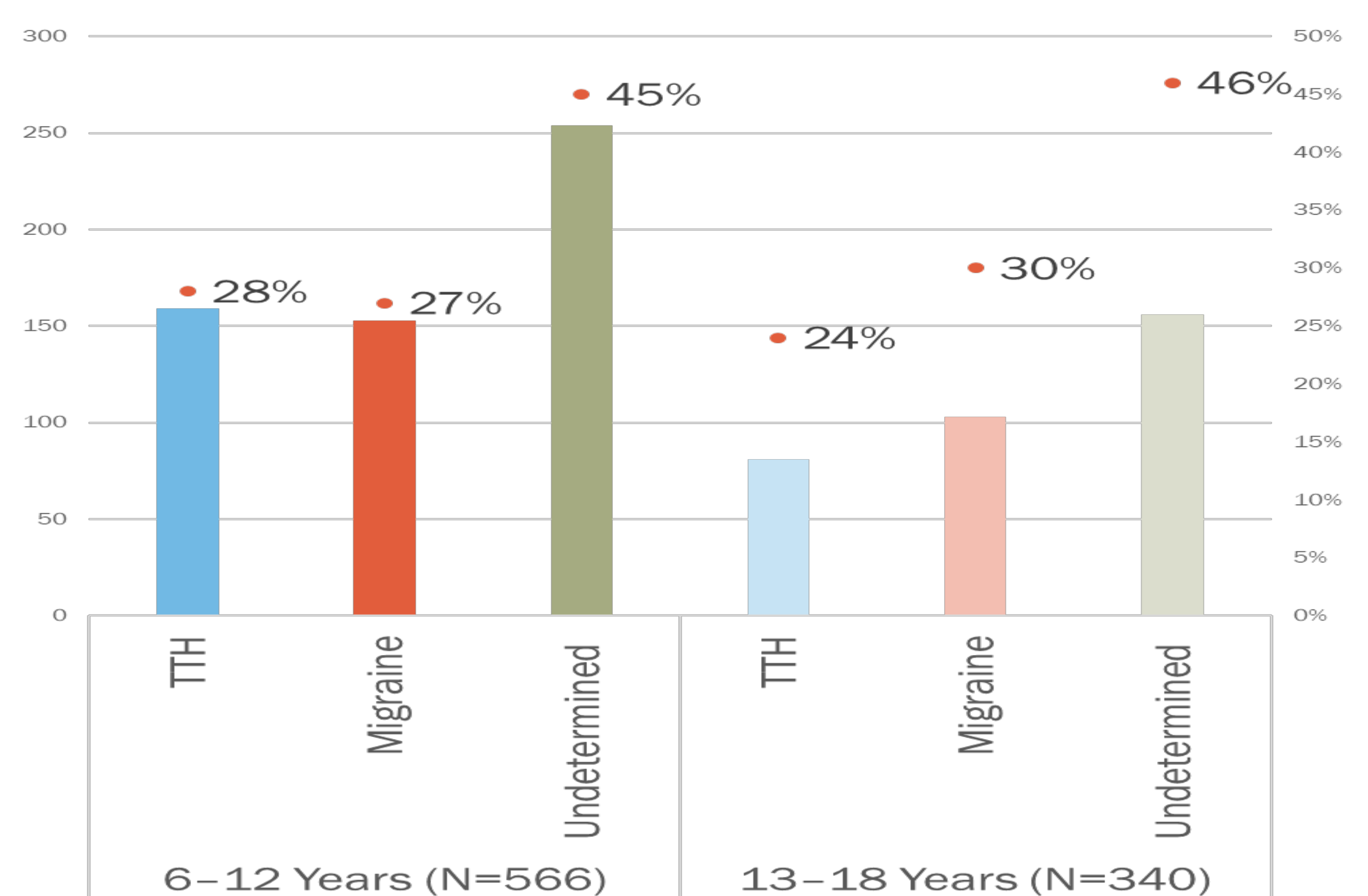
Medical records of children referred for primary headache to the pediatric neurology clinic from 2008 to 2017 were assessed. Headache was diagnosed according to IHS 3 criteria.



RESULTS

989 patients (range 6–18 years; 53% females) were assessed at our neurology clinic. 24% (N=241) were diagnosed with TTH, 26% (N=256) with migraine, and 4.5% (45) with mixed headache. In 41.5% (410) we were unable to reach a specific diagnosis. No differences in gender or age were found between the groups. Children in the migraine group used more analgesic treatments to stop the headache attacks compared to the TTH group (50% vs. 38%, $p=0.001$). Patients diagnosed with TTH reported having more emotional difficulties ($p=0.001$). No significant differences were found in headache characteristics (i.e., location, sidedness, character), frequency, or intensity between the younger children (ages 6–12) and the adolescents (ages 13–18) within either the TTH or migraine groups.

Comparing headache diagnosis in young and older children controls



CONCLUSIONS

Retrospective application of International Headache Society criteria in a large cohort of children with headaches failed to diagnose a specific type of headache in 41.5% of children. Migraine and TTH were equally prevalent, and both constituted a major burden on our patients' everyday lives. We found no major differences in headache characteristics between younger children and adolescents.