

INTRODUCTION

- Hemicrania continua is an uncommon primary headache disorder with absolute response to the therapeutic dose of indomethacin (1).
- Some patients cannot continue indomethacin due to their intolerance to its side effects.
- Melatonin, a pineal hormone, which shares similar chemical structure to indomethacin has been reported to have some efficacy for hemicrania continua in previous case reports and series (2).

CONCLUSION

- Melatonin showed some efficacy in the treatment of hemicrania continua with a well-tolerated side effect profile.
- At the doses used, melatonin does not have the same absolute responsiveness as indomethacin.
- Melatonin offers a well-tolerated option that can have significant ameliorating effects in a substantial cohort of patients.

AIM

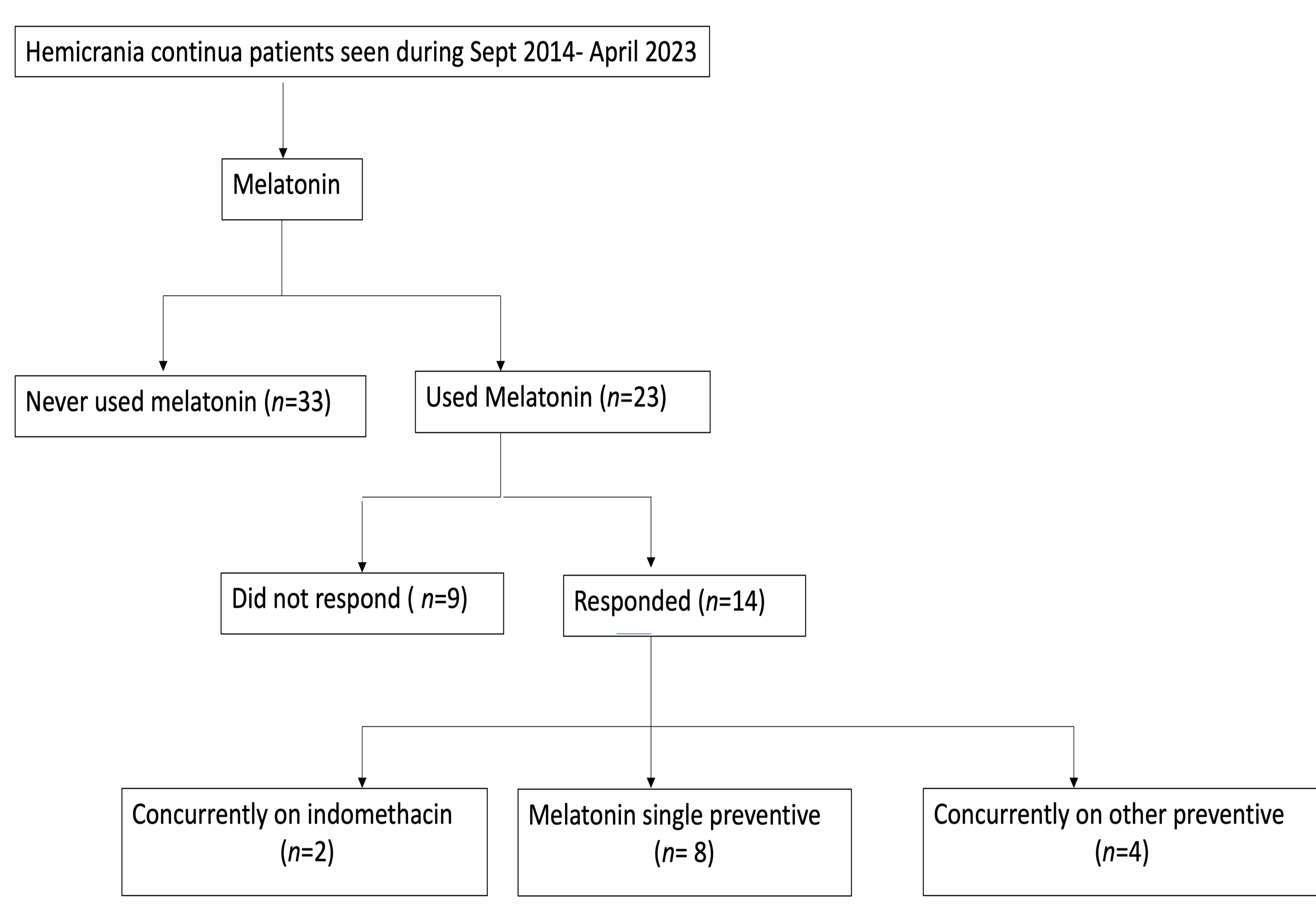
- To describe the clinical use of melatonin in patients of hemicrania continua as an adjunctive preventive treatment.

METHOD

- Audit of patient data extracted from routinely collected clinical records in consecutive patients with hemicrania continua seen in King's College Hospital from September 2014 to April 2023.

RESULTS

- Fifty-six patients were included with mean age 52 (± 16 , SD) years; 43 of 56 (77%) patients were female.
- All patients were diagnosed with hemicrania continua according to the ICHD-3 beta.
- Melatonin was taken by 23 (41%) patients.
- Fifteen (65%) patients had a positive intramuscular indomethacin test, while the remaining 8 (35%) showed a positive response to an oral indomethacin trial.
- The daily dose of indomethacin ranged from 75 mg to 225 mg.
- Commonly reported side effects of indomethacin included nausea, stomach discomfort and peptic ulcer.
- Fourteen (61%) patients reported some positive relief for headache, while the remaining 9 (39%) patients reported no headache preventive effect.
- None of the patient reported they were completely pain free with melatonin treatment.
- Two patients continued indomethacin and melatonin concurrently for better symptom relief.
- Eight patients stopped indomethacin and continued melatonin as the single preventive treatment.



- Doses of melatonin ranged from 0.5mg to 21mg.
- Side effects from melatonin were rare: sleepiness (n=1), worsening of headache (n=2).
- One patient stopped melatonin to become pregnant.

REFERENCES

- Headache Classification Committee of the International Headache Society (IHS) The International Classification of Headache Disorders, 3rd edition. Cephalalgia. 2018;38(1):1-211.
- Rozen TD. How effective is melatonin as a preventive treatment for hemicrania continua? A clinic-based study. Headache. 2015;55(3):430-6.

Contact

David Cheung
 Email: cheungsingngai@gmail.com

