



Persistent Headache After COVID-19: Clinical Characteristics of a Case Series

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Objectives

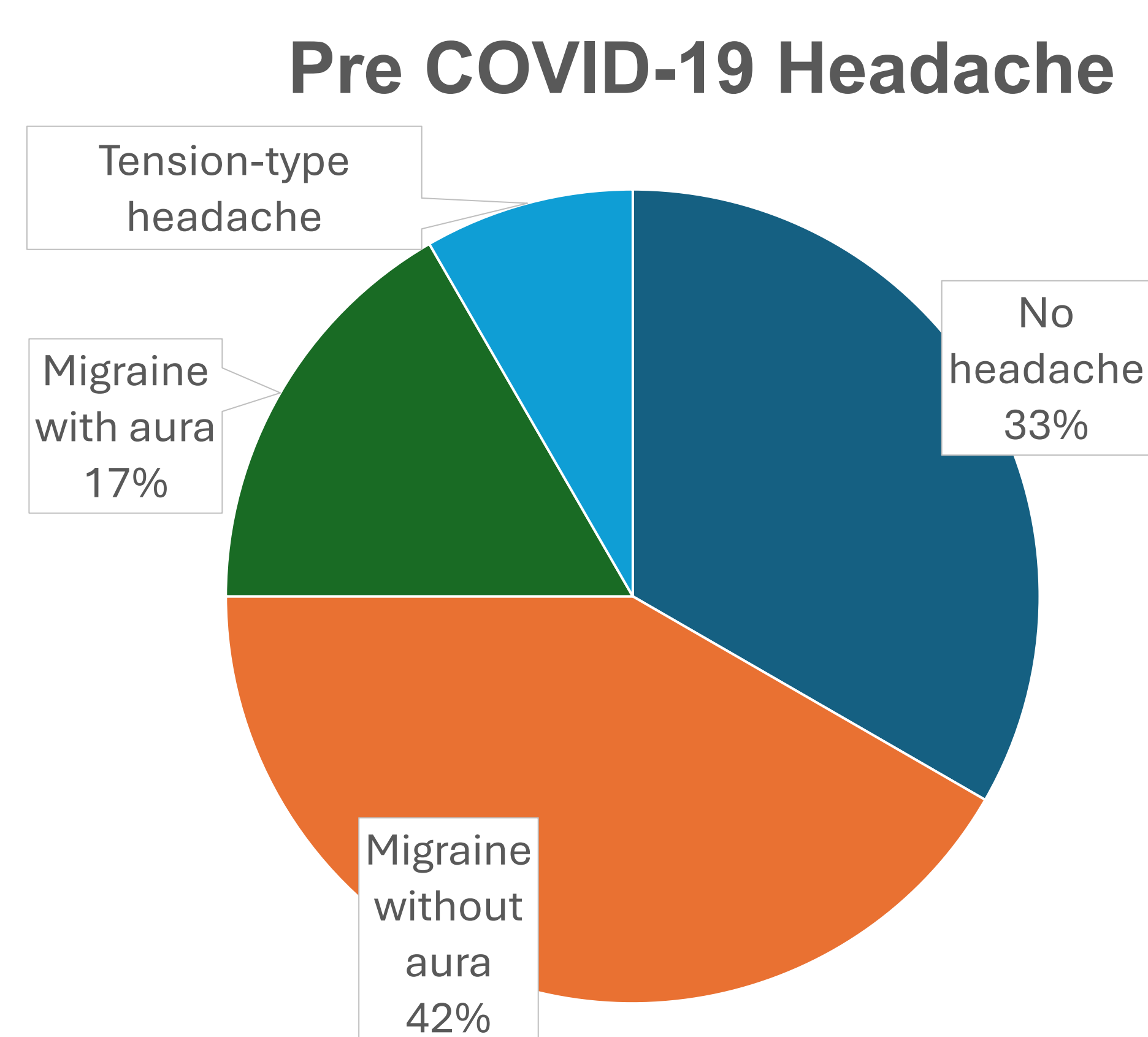
To describe the clinical and epidemiological characteristics of a case series of patients experiencing persistent and daily headaches following SARS-CoV-2 infection.

Methods

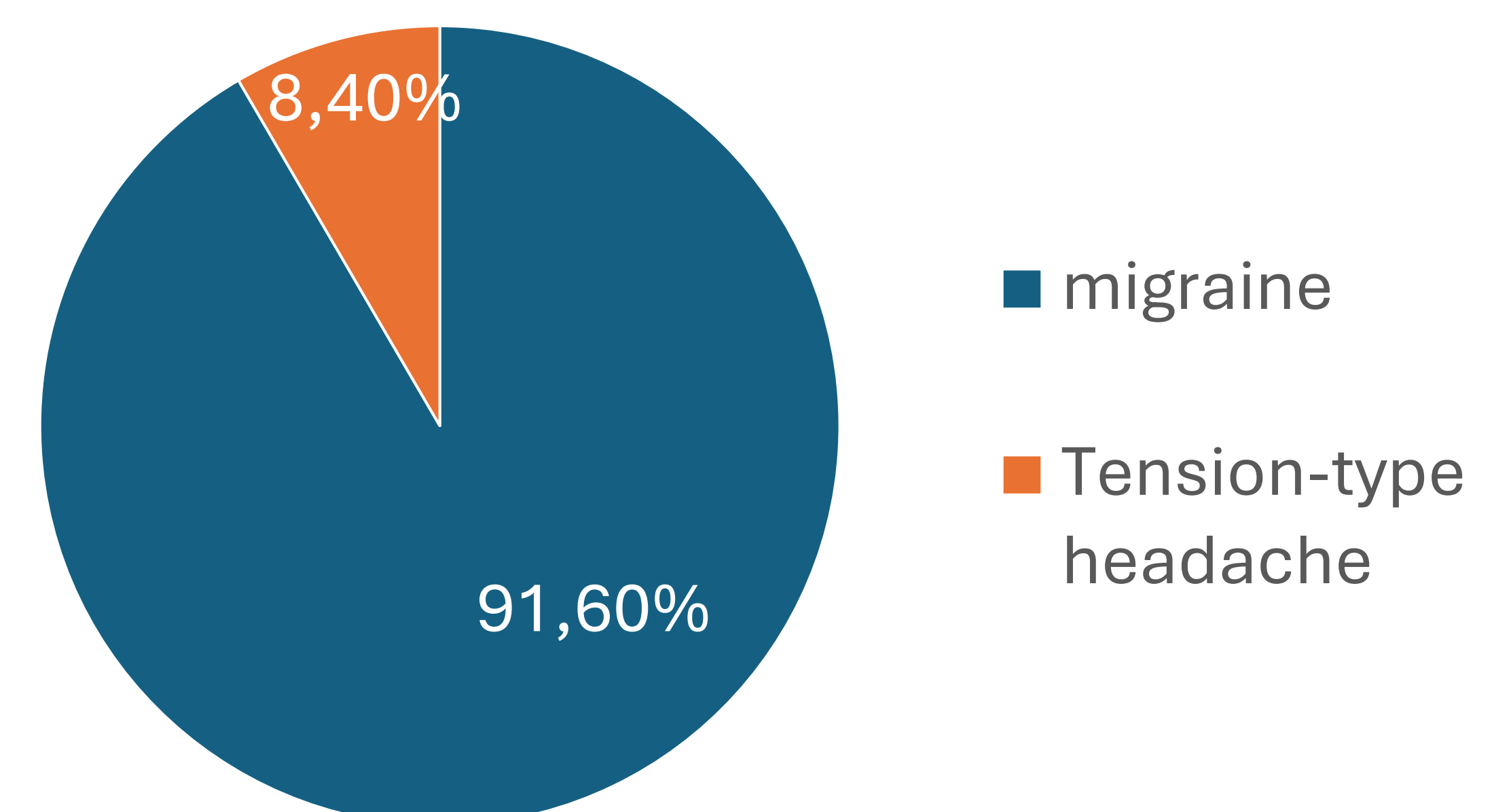
A descriptive case series study was conducted, involving 12 patients followed at a specialized headache outpatient clinic. These patients developed headaches during the acute phase of COVID-19 in 2020, with persistence of symptoms four years after onset. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered, and headache impact was assessed using the Brazilian version of the Headache Impact Test (HIT-6). Anxiety and depression levels were evaluated using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HAD).

Results

Of the 12 patients, 10 were female and 2 were male, with a mean age of 54 years (median: 53; IQR: 12).



Post-COVID-19 Headaches



After four years, 75% (n=9) reported chronic, severe headaches, 50% (n=6) experienced daily frequency, and only one patient had previously received prophylactic treatment (topiramate) with partial response. Half of the participants reported an increase in headache intensity compared to the acute phase.

	Mean ± SD
HIT-6	66.1 ± 5.3
HAD-D	10 ± 3.5
HAD-A	11.7 ± 3.05

Table 1

HIT-6 results indicated a severe impact, with 25% (n=3) exhibiting probable depression. Anxiety, measured by the HAD-A, showed 50% (n=6) with probable anxiety. All patients underwent neurological examination without abnormalities. All patients underwent magnetic resonance imaging which were normal.

Conclusion

Persistent and daily headaches following COVID-19 infection is a relatively under-researched condition. However, it may be associated with a more intense, migraine-like phenotype and has a significant impact on patients' lives, particularly in terms of increased anxiety levels.