

## Migraine risk increased in families with epilepsy

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A FAMILY history of epilepsy could increase the risk of migraines, a US study has suggested.

The finding of a shared genetic susceptibility to migraine with aura and epilepsy could lead to targeted treatments, according to the authors.

Researchers from Columbia University analysed 730 patients with epilepsy from 501 families at 27 clinics in the US, Canada, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand. The study looked at sibling and parent-child pairs with focal epilepsy or generalised epilepsy of unknown cause.

Previous research has found people with epilepsy are substantially more likely than the general population to experience migraine but it was not clear whether there was a genetic link.

"Our study is the first to confirm a shared genetic susceptibility to epilepsy and migraine in a large population of patients with common forms of epilepsy," said lead author Dr Melodie Winawer from Columbia University Medical Center.

The participants, who had three or more close relatives with a seizure disorder, were more than twice as likely to experience migraines with aura than patients who had fewer relatives with seizure disorders.

"Further investigation of the genetics of groups of comorbid disorders and epilepsy will help to improve the diagnosis and treatment of these comorbidities, and enhance the quality of life for those with epilepsy," Dr Winawer said.

The rate of migraine was increased only in those who had close, rather than distant, relatives with epilepsy and only when three or more family members were affected.

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