

# New treatment option for migraine sufferers

*By ACSH Staff — January 22, 2013*

For those individuals who suffer from migraines 12 percent of the US population [according to](#) <sup>[1]</sup> the American Migraine Prevalence and Prevention Study a new treatment option has just been [approved](#) <sup>[2]</sup> by the Food and Drug Administration: a patch that attaches to the upper arm or thigh. Its brand-name is Zecuity, and it s approved to treat not only migraines, but also the intense nausea which often accompanies them. At the press of a built-in button, the patch delivers sumatriptan, one of the most widely prescribed medications for migraines. The patch is battery operated and is programmed to deliver 6.5 milligrams of the drug over the course of five hours.

Zecuity was approved after a series of studies involving a total of 800 patients. One study found that 18 percent of patients using the patch were headache-free after 2 hours compared with only 9 percent of those using an inactive placebo. 84 percent of patients using the patch were relieved of nausea, compared with 63 percent of those taking a placebo. Side effects included pain at the site of application, in addition to tingling, itching, warmth and discomfort.

Despite the fact that migraines are a common problem among American adults, surprisingly few drugs are approved for the treatment of acute, symptomatic migraine. It seems that this treatment may offer promise to migraine sufferers, according to Dr. Fawad Khan, a neurologist with Ochsner Neuroscience Institute in New Orleans. But it will come at a cost when it becomes available later this year. The class of medications known as triptans can sell for as much as \$300 per month.

But according to Nancy Waltman, a nurse practitioner with the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Nursing, the more treatment options !the better. Migraine patients tend to be underdiagnosed and undertreated and inappropriately treated.

ACSH s Dr. Josh Bloom notes, the triptans (there are now eight of them) were designed specifically to treat migraines by a novel mechanism. When Imitrex (sumatriptan) was launched by Glaxo in 1992, it was a revolutionary new therapy that has made huge differences in people s lives. There were no satisfactory treatments prior to this. And the fact that unlike other rapidly-acting treatments which require an injection, this new method does not, will come as a relief to those who dislike self-injecting.

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## Links

[1] [http://www.headaches.org/press/NHF\\_Press\\_Kits/Press\\_Kits\\_-\\_AMPPS\\_Fact\\_Sheet](http://www.headaches.org/press/NHF_Press_Kits/Press_Kits_-_AMPPS_Fact_Sheet)

[2] <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-01-fda-skin-patch-combat-migraines.html>