



## The Migraine-High Blood Pressure Connection: Unmasking the Confounding Factors for Accurate Treatment

**Saadallah M HALIMI\***

*Physical Therapy, Acupuncture, Medical Thermography, SHRC, Lebanon*

**\*Corresponding Author:** Saadallah M HALIMI, Physical Therapy, Acupuncture, Medical Thermography, SHRC, Lebanon.

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Migraine and high blood pressure are two common conditions that often coexist, making the diagnosis and optimal treatment challenging for healthcare professionals. Recent studies have provided insights into the complex relationship between migraines and high blood pressure, indicating that the traditional approach of treating high blood pressure alone may lack effectiveness in managing migraines. This article aims to elucidate the potential mechanisms linking migraines to high blood pressure and emphasize the importance of considering muscle relaxants as a viable treatment option.

Migraine is a neurological disorder characterized by recurrent, severe headaches and debilitating symptoms such as nausea, photophobia, and phonophobia. High blood pressure (hypertension) is a prevalent cardiovascular condition associated with an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. Although the precise mechanisms underlying their relationship remain unclear, several studies have indicated a bidirectional association between migraines and high blood pressure.

### Migraine-induced hypertension

#### Sympathetic nervous system activation

Migraines can trigger the activation of the sympathetic nervous system, leading to increased adrenaline release and subsequent vasoconstriction. This sympathetic overdrive has been implicated in the development of elevated blood pressure during migraine attacks. Moreover, elevated levels of circulating catecholamines, such as norepinephrine and dopamine, have been observed in migraine patients, further supporting the link between migraines and hypertension.

#### Inflammatory response

Migraines involve neurogenic inflammation, characterized by the release of pro-inflammatory molecules such as calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP). This neuroinflammatory response may induce endothelial dysfunction and impair arterial vasodilation, contributing to an elevation in blood pressure. Additionally, chronic inflammation may exacerbate peripheral vasoconstriction, increasing the risk of hypertension.

Misleading cardiologists: focus on blood pressure medications

The comorbidity of migraines and hypertension often leads to an overemphasis on solely managing blood pressure in clinical practice. Cardiologists, who frequently encounter hypertensive patients with migraines, may inadvertently overlook the contribution of migraine-related mechanisms to hypertension development. This oversight may result in the prescription of blood pressure medications without addressing the underlying cause.

### The role of muscle relaxants

Muscle relaxants provide an alternative therapeutic approach for patients with migraines and concomitant hypertension. Skeletal muscle tension has been identified as a common trigger for migraines, and its reduction can lead to significant symptom relief. Muscle relaxants, such as benzodiazepines or baclofen, target the central or peripheral muscle tone regulation pathways, providing relief from muscle tension contributing to migraines. By alleviating muscle tension, these medications may indirectly lead to blood pressure reduction in patients with migraine-induced hypertension.

### Conclusion

The relationship between migraines and high blood pressure is complex, involving various physiological mechanisms. The prevalent focus on blood pressure management alone may lead to inadequate treatment strategies for individuals with migraines and hypertension. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the underlying migraine-related mechanisms of hypertension development while considering correct treatment options such as muscle relaxants. A comprehensive approach that addresses both migraines and hypertension can yield better patient outcomes and improve quality of life for those burdened by these interconnected conditions.