

My name is Daniel James Underwood, 35 y/o, m, suffering severe migraine like pain.

I joined the Australian Army in 2006 as an infantry soldier at the age of 17. After deployments to East Timor and Afghanistan I transferred to be a mechanic as my body was starting to struggle with the physical abuse I had put it through. I was medically discharged in 2015 and took up a job as heavy vehicle mechanic.

Medical history

Multiple L knee arthroscopies

L knee ACL replacement and hardware removal

R knee arthroscopy

Multiple cortisone injections for bursitis in both shoulders

Multiple R shoulder arthroscopies and tendon repair

Severe abdominal tear

Lumbar spondylosis

Cervical spondylosis

Arthritis in knees/shoulders/lumbar and cervical spine etc

Mental health conditions incl PTSD depression anxiety ADHD

Current Medications

Prazosin 2mg (nightly)

Mirtazapine 45mg (nightly)

Concerta 54mg (Daily)

Ritalin 10mg (morning and lunch)

Propranolol 40mg x2 (morning and night)

Topiramate 50mg (morning and night)

Prochlorperazine 5mg (as required)

Rizatriptan 10mg (as required)

The pain

The onset is quite quick, the pain I experience seems to start in the left side of my neck/trap and run up over my left ear and into my left temple and behind my left eye. My left closes from the pain and I will begin to cry. The pain radiates through the top left of my skull, ear and jaw. The left side of my

neck and shoulder become stiff and sore. It feels like the blood vessels in my left temple are swollen and pulsating with a sharp excruciating stabbing throbbing pain. I am in so much pain I find somewhere to sit with my head in my hands and struggle to respond to people. Whilst at work I have to hide in the toilet so I don't get sent home. If I'm quick when I feel it coming and have a Rizatriptan 10mg it only lasts about 30min-1 hr. If I second guess myself if I can feel it coming or not or if I'm imagining it and I don't have a Rizatriptan until it's too late it lasts for 1-2 hours. If I have a Prochlorperazine 5mg instead of disappearing after the hour it will be a dull more relaxed pain for 4-6 hours after the initial attack. When the attack disappears on Rizatriptan whilst rubbing my temple vigorously the pain from me touching my temple almost causes me to pass out and then randomly, instantly the pain disappears in a matter of a couple of seconds and the attack is over.

Brief Timeline

Feb 2021 First migraine

March 2021-July 2021 almost daily migraines (recorded with mention of L side)

May 2021 prescribed propranolol 40mg twice a day and rizatriptan 10mg wafer as required

April 2022 migraines returned for a few months

April 2022 propranolol increased to 80mg twice a day

Mar/Apr 2023 migraines returned gradually

Apr 2023 migraines returned to daily

Apr 2023 prescribed topomax 50mg twice a day as well as propranolol

Apr 2023 prescribed Prochlorperazine 5mg instead of rizatriptan 10mg as taking too many

June 2023 getting 3-4 attacks per day (every 6-8 hours) could no longer work

June 2023 started physio and remedial massage

June 2023 massage identified a very sore spot in my neck that brought on the pain

June 2023 researched pain in that spot and found a study on an occipital nerve block

June 2023 referred for Occipital nerve block

July 2023 migraines gone

July 2023-Feb 2024 remedial massage every 2-3 weeks

Dec 2023 seen by neurologist

March 2024 migraines returned weekly increasing in frequency

21 April 2024 2-3 attacks a day

30 April 2024 Occipital nerve block injection with no improvement

Detailed Timeline

I began recording headaches March 2021 my record keeping wasn't great as I didn't know what I know now. The first round of them seemed to occur almost daily lasting a couple of hours mainly on the left side (where recorded) with Panadol (4) and Nurofen (4) and trialing heat pack/ice pack or deep heat, providing no relief. After a couple of months of records of this (mainly in the evening when I was relaxed) my GP prescribed me Propranolol 40mg twice a day. After a couple more months they disappeared. In that two months he also prescribed me rizatriptan 10mg wafers which if I caught the onset of pain early enough the headache would not come at all or only last about 30 mins.

About 12 months later approx. April 2022 I can only presume my body had built up a tolerance to the Propranolol and the "migraines" started to return. My dose of Propranolol was doubled to 80mg twice a day and after a month or so they reduced and disappeared again.

In March/April 2023 they started to break through again increasing in frequency. I was taking rizatriptan to deal with them but after taking it too often my GP prescribed me Prochlorperazine 5 mg and also put me on 50 mg Topiramate twice a day as well as keeping me on the 80mg Propranolol twice a day. By June I had seen no improvement only an increase in attacks and it got to the point where I could no longer function or stay at work. I was having 3-4 attacks daily (every 6-8 hours)

Whilst off work I was investigating physio and remedial massage in the hope of some improvement. During my first massage there was a spot in my neck that caused extreme pain and felt like one of my "migraine" attacks. Once home I looked it up to see if I could find a muscle or something in that location that I could go back to my GP with. I identified that there wasn't just a small muscle in that location that could account for my localized pain as the muscle was the Splenius Capitis. I then found an article about this muscle causing headaches "Splenius Capitis Muscle Syndrome" which when read describes how the muscle is inflamed and pinches the Greater Occipital Nerve and causes the exact severe pain I feel and where I feel it. I went back to my GP with this information and was immediately booked in for the Occipital Nerve block and given a referral to see a neurologist. Approx 12 days later my "migraines" stopped.

I saw a neurologist in Dec 2023 and went over all the information with him. He informed me that I have just got "migraines", nothing to do with possible pinched nerve. He informed me he was surprised the nerve block had worked and was also very surprised I hadn't had an attack since. He informed me people just acquire migraines and I would just have to learn to live with them.

In March 2024 they started to return weekly but gradually building. The only thing that seems to lessen the effect is the Rizatriptan 10mg wafers. 21st April 2024 my attacks started occurring daily and by the 26th April 2024 2-3 a day. I was referred for another Occipital nerve block injection and have since received it on the 30th April 2024. It is now the 14th of May 2024, 14 days later and the Occipital Nerve Block has not achieved the same result as last time. I am currently still having 2-3 attacks a day and am now booked in for another Nerve block on Thursday the 16th May 2024. I will also be returning to work Friday and trying to push through with the pain. Previously I've found

myself having to hide in the toilets at work when I get an attack due to the pain I am in and how I look so as to prevent getting sent home.

I understand you are very busy and aren't really taking on new patients at this time so I thank you for taking the time to read my history and consider taking me on. I hope I have provided a detailed enough history that it can relate to a case you have treated previously and therefore would be an easy fix for you. If not, hopefully you could please point me in the direction of a neurologist you think may be able to assist me as this condition is really taking its toll on my life and my family physically, mentally and financially.

Thankyou for your time

Sincerely

Daniel James Underwood

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