



# Effective Health Care

## Prophylactic Treatment of Migraine Headaches Nomination Summary Document

### Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Prophylactic treatment of migraine headaches will go forward for refinement as a systematic review. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/>.

### Topic Description

**Nominator:** Anonymous individual

**Nomination Summary:** The nominator questions the effectiveness of Alzheimer's medications for the treatment of migraines. He/she also questions the comparative effectiveness of these medications compared to commonly used therapies.

**Key Questions from Nominator:** None

### Considerations

- The topic meets all EHC Program selection criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)
- Headache disorders are among the most common conditions worldwide, with three times as many women affected as men. Migraine headaches are very common during childhood and adolescence. The World Health Organization (WHO) placed migraine 19th (12th in women) among all causes of disability worldwide.
- Recurrent migraines can significantly interfere with a patient's quality of life. Circumstances that may warrant the use of preventive (prophylactic) treatment include: 1) Recurring migraine that interferes significantly with quality of life, 2) Four or more attacks per month, 3) Migraines not controlled by pain

medication, or 4) Frequent, long, or uncomfortable auras (visual, sensory, or language symptoms). Migraine prophylactic treatment is not expected to fully eliminate headache pain, but treatment is considered successful if frequency of migraines is decreased.

- A review specifically focused on the use of Alzheimer's drugs for migraine prophylaxis as suggested by the nominator would not be feasible given a lack of literature. However, sufficient literature exists to complete a review on the broader topic of prophylactic treatments for migraine.