Ketamine May Relieve Migraine Sufferers' Pain

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Migraines can be hard to manage for folks who are unresponsive to treatments designed to prevent these fierce headaches. Now, new findings presented at the Anesthesiology 2017 annual meeting suggest that ketamine, an anesthetic drug, might be an alternative therapy option, reports Medical News Today.

For the study, researchers reviewed the data of 61 patients who had intractable, or difficult to treat, migraines and weren't responding to current treatments. Scientists treated everyone with ketamine infusions for three to seven days.

Results showed that participants announced a 75 percent decrease in the intensity of their migraine pain following ketamine treatment. The average migraine pain measured 7.5 on a scale of 1 to 10 at the study's baseline, but dropped to 3.4 by the end of the study. Researchers noted that migraine pain dipped to its lowest during the fourth day of ketamine infusion and adverse effects were mild.

"Ketamine may hold promise as a treatment for migraine headaches in patients who have failed other treatments," said Eric Schwenk, MD, the director of orthopedic anesthesia at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. "Our study focused only on short-term relief, but it is encouraging that this treatment might have the potential to help patients long term."

Schwenk and his team couldn't reach definite conclusions about ketamine's effect on migraine pain because of the study's design. But researchers remarked that their work supports ketamine's potential as a remedy for migraine pain and paves the way for more studies to come.

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