IHS-Visiting Professor Programme

Report Dr Y Fogang
Dakar, Senegal, 19–20 June 2014

Visiting Professors is an initiative of the IHS Education committee with the aim to send headache specialists as representatives of IHS to attend regional meetings, or teach at a headache centre, in countries that might need or want increased headache education and motivation.

The First IHS Visiting Professor Programme in Sub-Saharan Africa was held in Dakar, Senegal from Thursday 19th to Friday 20th June 2014.

Pr. Jean Schoenen from Headache Research Unit of Citadelle Hospital in Liège, Belgium, was The Visiting Professor for this programme.
The Meeting was a great success with around 50 neurologists and neurology residents attending.
The Neurology Department of the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar was the first centre dedicated to training of neurologists in the French speaking Sub-Saharan Africa. It welcomes neurology trainees from around fifteen African countries.

Thursday 19th June 2014

The Meeting was declared open at 08.45 by Pr. Mansour Ndiaye, head of the Neurology Department. Then he introduced the Guest Speaker Pr. Jean Schoenen. He acknowledged the contribution of Pr. Schoenen in training of some African neurologists in headache sub-specialty. He thanked him for accepting this invitation. He also thanked The Education Committee of The IHS for this Initiative through which so many neurologists or neurology trainee in developing countries are able to further their interests in ‘Headache Medicine’. He spoke about the advantages of becoming a member of the International Headache Society (IHS).

Pr. Schoenen in his introductory speech said it was a pleasure for him to take part in the training of neurologists in Sub-Saharan Africa through IHS.
Then he delivered his opening talk on the ‘pathophysiology of headache’. He presented anatomic pathways and networks implicated in head and neck pain. He explained peripheral and central sensitization, mechanisms of referred pain, allodynia, and headache chronicisation.

This was followed by a second talk on the principles and evolution of the International Classification of Headache Disorders (ICHD). He presented the recent ICHD-3 beta.

Pr. Schoenen then presented a clinical case to illustrate what he presented before. This was followed by a coffee break during which Pr. Schoenen discussed and shared greetings with participants.

He next spoke on ‘Clinical phenotypes of migraine’ followed by a talk on ‘pathophysiology and genetics of migraine’, with emphasis on points with clinical implication.
He then presented the principles of migraine management. He detailed international recommendations on migraine treatment, with emphasis on non pharmacological and
pharmacological methods. He explained the importance of patient education in the management of migraine. Given the non availability or inaccessibility of many drugs for migraine attack treatment or prevention in the African setting, he also discussed alternatives options with comparable efficacy. He presented a clinical case to illustrate diagnostic and therapeutic approach in case of migraine.

Pr Schoenen then delivered a talk on ‘tension-type headache’, followed by an interactive session with comments, questions and answers. Some participants briefly presented difficult cases for discussion. This session was followed by a break for lunch.

In the post lunch session, Pr Schoenen spoke on ‘Facial pain and Trigeminal Autonomic Cephalalgias (TACs)’. He insisted on the fact that TACs are not rare, and are frequently misdiagnosed. He stressed on diagnostic clues to identify TACs and to distinguish them from other facial pain, migraine and other primary headaches. This presentation was illustrated by an interactive clinical case. The next talk was on ‘diagnosis and management of headaches at the emergency department’, where he mentioned the value of lumbar puncture when dealing with febrile acute or subacute headaches, to exclude meningitis after ruling out a space occupying lesion. This was followed by two presentations on ‘headache attributed to CSF pressure modification’ and ‘cervicogenic headaches’. The session was closed at 17.15 with an interactive clinical case discussion.

**Friday 20th June 2014**

The session began at 09:00 by a talk on ‘Medication Overuse Headache’. Pr Schoenen explained that frequent use (more than two days/week) of over the counter pain killers like paracetamol or ibuprofen, is associated with medication overuse headache and headache chronicization in patients suffering from recurrent headaches. He also insisted on the fact that prophylactic treatments of primary headaches are ineffective when the patient is overusing attack medications.

The next talk was ‘Clinical neurophysiology of primary headaches’ where Pr Schoenen explained that neurophysiological methods are particularly suited for the study of primary headaches (which are not caused by a structural lesion). He mentioned that lack of habituation of visual evoked potentials was the most reproducible finding in migraine electrophysiology.

He next spoke on imaging in headache disorders. In clinical practice, the main indication of imaging is to exclude a secondary headache. He exposed the red flags that should prompt brain imaging in a patient presenting headaches.

Then, he presented an interactive clinical case to illustrate his previous talk. This was followed by the coffee break.

After the break, Pr Schoenen spoke on the impact of nutrition on primary headaches, especially migraine. He said nutritional factors like alcohol intake or fasting are main triggers of migraine attacks. Craving for chocolate and sugar are prodromes of migraine attacks. ‘These informations should be included in the patient education program’ he said.

The next talk was on comorbidities of migraine. Pr Schoenen invited the participants to always look for disorders which are associated with migraine more frequently than predicted by chance factor. This could have important implications especially in therapeutic options choice.
The next three talks concerned primary headaches treatment. Pr Schoenen briefly presented peripheral nerves blockade and neurostimulation in the treatment of severe or intractable headaches. He described the mechanism of action, efficacy and side effects of these methods. He listed the indications and described the technique of suboccipital nerve blockade in primary headaches.

The next talk was on ‘the art of treating headaches’. Pr Schoenen presented the approach and reasoning process to be adopted by a practitioner dealing with patients suffering from recurrent or chronic headaches. This session ended with an interactive clinical case illustrating therapeutic reasoning in front of a patient with headaches.

The course was closed at 13.30. Participants were very satisfied for the quality of presentations and discussion. They received a certificate of attendance to the course.

In the social event corner, Pr Schoenen and some participants went to Gorée Island and ‘Monument de la Renaissance Africaine’, two major historical sites in Africa.

We thank The IHS President - Dr. Alan Rapoport, Dr. Guus Schoonman of The Education Committee, Mrs Carol Taylor of the IHS secretary for her constant help and support. We also thank the local organizing team especially Drs Camara, Toffa, Ndiaga and Ba.
The Visiting Professor Programme of IHS is a useful initiative that will surely help to reduce the burden of headache disorders worldwide.