



Headache

A 40-year-old woman is brought to the ED complaining of severe headache. The headache is the worst she has ever experienced, was rapid in onset, and is associated with vomiting and mild photophobia.

Clinical examination is unremarkable apart from mild evident photophobia, and she has normal vital signs (including being afebrile).

1. What features on history will assist you in making a diagnosis?
2. Discuss the use and timing of a Lumbar puncture in this woman? (What investigations are required on the CSF?)

The patient has a normal CT brain and subsequently undergoes a LP, which is also normal. She has ongoing severe headache.

3. Describe your management options for her headache?

The patient is treated for migraine successfully and is discharged later that day. She returns to the ED 3 days later with headache. Her headache is now different to her initial presentation, was progressive in onset, and is much worse when she stands up.

4. What is the diagnosis, and how is it treated?

After hearing her diagnosis, the patient states she wants to make a formal complaint about the initial management, as “clearly her complication shows mismanagement”.

5. What is the best way to respond?