

Lithium is a medication that has been used for many years to treat various medical conditions, including cluster headaches. Cluster headaches are a rare and extremely painful type of headache that occur in clusters or cycles, usually lasting for several weeks or months at a time.

Lithium is most commonly used a mood stabiliser that works by altering the levels of certain chemicals in the brain, such as serotonin and norepinephrine. It is believed that these chemicals play a role in the development of cluster headaches.

While lithium is not a first-line treatment for cluster headaches, it may be considered when other medications have failed to provide relief. It is generally prescribed in low doses, and it may take several weeks to months to determine if it is effective in reducing the frequency and severity of cluster headaches.

It is important to note that lithium can have significant side effects, including gastrointestinal upset, tremors, and thyroid dysfunction. Therefore, close monitoring by a specialist or GP is necessary while taking this medication. Blood monitoring of lithium levels and kidney function is required whilst on treatment.

In addition to medication, other treatments for cluster headaches may include oxygen therapy, nerve blocks, and in some cases, surgical intervention. A comprehensive approach to managing cluster headaches may involve input from a multidisciplinary team, including neurologists and pain specialists.

If you are experiencing cluster headaches and are considering treatment with lithium or any other medication, it is important to discuss the potential benefits and risks with your consultant. They can help determine the most appropriate treatment plan for your individual needs.