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## [Too Many Headaches? Your Brain is Different](#)

*Those suffering from migraine have thicker somatosensory cortex*

Does everything and everybody around give you headaches? In this case your brain is different. The sensory brain cortex of the people suffering from migraine has been found to be thicker than in non-vulnerable people, even if the team at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, that published its results in Neurology could not say if this was the cause or the result of migraine attacks. This might turn the subjects hyper-sensitive to pain in general. The team investigating a pool of 24 people affected by migraine and 12 non-vulnerable people found a difference of 21% in the mentioned area. "Repeated migraine attacks may lead to, or be the result of, these structural changes in the brain. Most of these people had been suffering from migraines since childhood, so the long-term over-stimulation of the sensory fields in the cortex could explain these changes. It's also possible that people who develop migraines are naturally more sensitive to stimulation." said lead researcher Dr Nouchine Hadjikhani. "This may explain why people with migraines often also have other pain disorders such as back pain, jaw pain, and other sensory problems such as allodynia, where the skin becomes so sensitive that even a gentle breeze can be painful." added Hadjikhani. Preventive action against migraine attacks could impede the occurrence of these brain changes and patients turning hyper-sensitive to pain. Known effective anti-migraine drugs are beta blockers, like propranolol and anti-depressants, like amitriptyline. Other neurological conditions decrease the thickness of the cortex, like multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's disease. Also high amounts of motor training and learning thicken the motor area of the cortex. "The new data provide further clear evidence that migraine is a brain disorder. The findings are consistent with a change in the way the brain handles information, such as pain signals or light or sound. These changes do not represent damage but probably an adaptation by the brain to the disorder." Professor Peter Goadsby, of the University College London Institute of Neurology, said BBC News.