HeadacheCoach: Towards headache prevention by sensing and making sense of personal lifestyle data

Abstract:

Estimates are that almost half of the world's population has an active primary headache disorder, i.e. with no illness as an underlying cause. These can start manifesting in early adulthood and can last until the rest of the sufferer's life. Most specialists concur that sudden changes in daily lifestyle, such are sleep rhythm, nutrition behavior or stress experience, can be valid triggers for headache sufferers. Health care professionals recommend leading a diary to self-monitor personal headache triggers in order to learn to avoid headache attacks. However, making sense out of this data is difficult. Despite existing smartphone approaches in literature that have evaluated behavior change support systems for headaches, they have failed to provide appropriate feedback on the collected daily data to showcase what causes or prevents an individual's headache attacks. In this paper, we present HeadacheCoach, a smartphone app that tracks headache-triggering lifestyle data and headache attacks on a daily
basis and propose a mixed-method approach to examine which feedback method(s) can strive
the behavior change most in order to prevent future headache attacks.

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