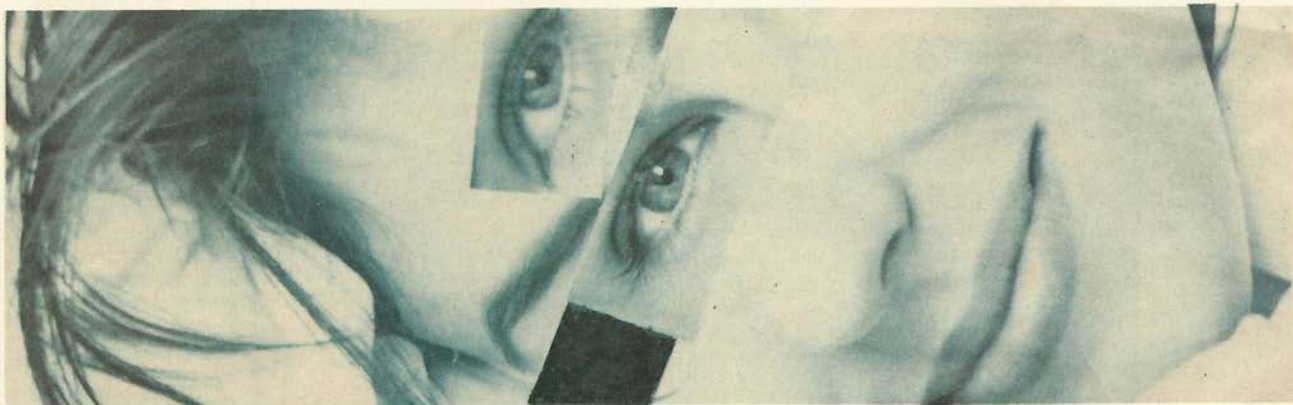


*Dr. K. Ravishankar*

A SPECIALIST IN HEADACHE MANAGEMENT EXPLORES THE PATTERN OF HEADACHES SEEN IN A WOMAN'S REPRODUCTIVE PERIOD AND THEIR POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP TO FLUCTUATING HORMONE LEVELS

GRAPHICS: FRANCIS H. D'SA



# WOMen AND MigrAiNE

Research the world over is now focusing on measurement of hormonal levels in women. It is reasoned that headaches may also be controlled by maintaining a suppressed, low level of serum oestrogen in women with unresponsive migraine

IT is the most common of recurrent headaches. Although one in 10 persons is a migraine victim, women are three times more likely to suffer these 'sick headaches' than men, especially around the time of their menstrual periods. Just why are women more susceptible than men?

Vinita, a 30-year-old bank executive, and mother of two children, has suffered from recur-

rent headaches for the last 15 years; she has consumed countless over-the-counter medications and the stronger analgesics prescribed by her family doctor. Despite them, one or two headaches always made their appearance in a month; one of them always starting a day or two prior to her menstrual period. The headaches were very

severe, one sided (sometimes on the right and sometimes on the left), lasting 12 to 24 hours and invariably accompanied by nausea. Vomiting made things better, but she could not tolerate light or noise, became very irritable and ultimately had to lie down in a dark room. She could not go to work on these days, and even had someone else look after her children. Medication

helped very little. Vinita remembers that her headaches had started around the time when she attained puberty and, besides the headaches she gets when she travels or goes out in the sun, she invariably got a bad headache at the time of her period. In fact, the only months she can remember not having had a headache were in the last trimesters of her pregnancies. She had