

Headache is one of the most common reasons for patients to seek medical attention. Being a manifestation of an underlying disease process, headache may be a reflection of a disorder in structures that anatomically are in close proximity of each other. As such, disorders of the eyes, temporomandibular joints, teeth, ear, nose and throat (including nasal and frontal sinuses), vascular and musculoskeletal systems can all manifest as a head pain condition. Interestingly disorders of the cervical and shoulder musculature may result in escalating levels of tension within these structures. If left untreated, this may result in formation of “Trigger points” which are hyper irritable spots, associated with palpable tender knots in the muscle fibers. Trigger points may cause local discomfort or referred pain, and when present in the neck and shoulder this referral pattern may manifest as a headache. A variety of treatment modalities are available to address this phenomena, ranging from massage therapy and stretching, trigger point injection with local anesthetics and steroids, pulsed ultrasound, and low level laser therapy also known as LLLT. This laser technology has gained an increasing popularity in recent years. Cleared by FDA in 2002, LLLT utilizes a hand held light emitting device to treat a variety of connective tissue and musculoskeletal disorders such as trigger points. In contrast to general surgical or cosmetic lasers that produce heat or thermo-destructive laser energy, LLLT causes no harm to human tissue in normal use. LLLT has been in medical use for over thirty years and has a long record of successful clinical studies demonstrating medical efficacy and safety. Through the action of photo stimulation, LLLT has demonstrated the ability to significantly accelerate and enhance the body’s natural defense and repair capabilities in certain disease conditions. In the case of trigger points, this provides pain relief, reducing the intensity of injury and facilitate more rapid repair.

In short LLLT is one of the many treatment options available to manage trigger point related referred pain to the head and neck manifesting as a headache.