

## Risk Factors for Recurrent Transient Global Amnesia

*Earlier age at first episode and personal or family history of migraine were associated with greater risk.*

Transient global amnesia (TGA) is a benign but highly distressing event of antegrade amnesia that usually lasts a few hours. Some events are associated with triggers that cause transient intracranial venous hypertension (e.g., Valsalva maneuver, sexual activity, emotional shock). Results of diagnostic evaluation, including imaging, usually are normal, and often no sequelae occur. In a 25-year retrospective study, Mayo Clinic investigators explored the factors associated with recurrence.

Of 1044 patients, 86% were seen for first episodes of TGA, and 14% had recurrent episodes at the time of evaluation. Patients with a single episode were older than those with recurrent episodes (mean age, 65 vs. 58). Nearly all patients with recurrent TGA had one or two additional events. The duration of antegrade amnesia was roughly the same for both groups: about 4 to 6 hours. Patients with recurrent TGA were significantly more likely than those with single episodes to have personal history of migraine (36% vs. 20%) and family history of migraine (31% vs. 19%).

### COMMENT

TGA is an uncommon diagnosis in primary care; I have seen two such patients in my career. But its effect is dramatic and causes great anxiety. After evaluation, which is almost always negative, the typical residual question is, “Will this happen again?” These results provide modest help in answering that question — a lack of personal or family history of migraine is somewhat comforting; however, the clinician is forced to focus on the benign nature of TGA and cannot be entirely reassuring. Finally, note that, on rare occasions, stroke syndromes and seizures can present with TGA-like symptoms.

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Morris KA et al. Factors associated with risk of recurrent transient global amnesia. *JAMA Neurol* 2020 Aug 31; [e-pub]. (<https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaneurol.2020.2943>)