

Examination Protocol in a Dizzy Patient

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Abstract

A practical easy to do examination protocol while approaching a patient of vertigo to clarify - Type of Dizziness. Dizziness is a term to describe a number of different sensations, especially uncertainty of a position or motion. Dizziness is derived from "Dysig" meaning stupid. Dizziness is categorized into 5 types: Vertigo, disequilibrium, lightheadedness, floating (psychogenic) and motion sickness and is illusion of motion or spinning sensation. Vertigo is of two types: Subjective in which person feels the motion and Objective in which surroundings revolve and patient sees the motion. Imbalance is wobbling on your feet-loss of balance without abnormal sensation. Patient usually complains of feeling of unsteadiness/imbalance when standing/walking/ turning - increased by uneven ground or turning. Fainting (Blackouts/ Presyncope) Usually due to cardiovascular e.g Postural Hypotension, Metabolic e.g. Hypoglycemia. Light headedness - Vague symptoms due to psychological cause, multisensory deficit etc. Motion Sickness - This is a mismatch between the visual and vestibular system. Commonly occurs with cars, boats and aero planes etc. When a patient approaches to vertigo clinic, for assessment First and foremost is to understand what patient means by dizziness-whether it is true vertigo or dizziness, type of Vertigo -- Central or Peripheral, then start ruling out the causes of dizziness and vertigo with special emphasis on examination of Vestibulo-ocular and Vestibulospinal reflexes - their relevance and their usefulness.

Keywords: Vertigo; Dizziness; Spinning; Illusion

Introduction

It can be defined as a (feeling or sensation of spinning of either yourself or the world around you). This feeling may be noticeable to very less extent, or it may be severe that you may feel sick, dizziness, find difficult to keep your balance i.e. loss of balance which can make standing, walking and everyday tasks difficult. Vertigo attack develops suddenly and last for few seconds but may last for longer time if severe.

Symptoms include spinning, tilting, dizziness, swaying, unbalanced, ringing in the ears or hearing loss, problem in focusing. Person may experience nausea feeling, Vomiting, headache, sweating, if it is bad enough.

Dizziness

Dizziness can be described by number of different sensations, especially uncertainty of a position or motion. Dizziness is derived from "Dysig" meaning stupid, foolish. It is a significant risk factor for falls in elderly individuals and it has been estimated to be the leading cause of serious injury and death in persons older than 65 years. Its treatment depends on the cause and symptoms a person have.

Difference between Vertigo and Dizziness

Dizziness can be described as a range of sensations, such as feeling faint, woozy, weak or unsteady whereas the Dizziness that creates the false feeling or sense that surroundings are spinning or moving is called vertigo.

Types of dizziness

Dizziness is categorized into 5 types:

Vertigo

In an easy way it can be defined as a feeling that either a person is moving or tilting or the things are spinning when no actual movement is taking place. It can be due to degeneration of the vestibular system of the inner ear. Vertigo is of 2 types.

First is subjective, in which person feels the motion and second is objective where surroundings revolve and patient sees the motion.

Disequilibrium

Basically it is a disturbance in balance or coordination which makes difficult to walk and can easily result in falls. Imbalance can be defined as wobbling on your feet-loss of balance without abnormal sensation.

Light headedness

It is sensation of just short of fainting (i.e. feeling of going to faint) while it may or may not happen in real. The sensation alone can be confusing. Some vague symptoms due to psychological cause, multisensory deficit, etc. come under this category. It may result due to low Blood Pressure or may also result in a simplest situation as standing up too quickly.

Floating (Psychogenic)

People with Generalized Anxiety Disorder may have feelings of distress, fear, worry, anxiousness which psychiatrists refer as floating anxiety (example, when a person looks straight downwards from a height and becomes immediately uncomfortable).

Motion Sickness

It can be described as a sensation of wooziness. This is a mismatch between the visual and vestibular system and may cause dizziness, lightheadedness, or nausea. It commonly occurs while travelling by cars, boats, train and aero planes etc.

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Received November 10, 2020; Accepted November 19, 2020; Published November 26, 2020

Citation: Sharma S (2020) Examination Protocol in a Dizzy Patient. J Nov Physiother 10: 445.

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Types of Vertigo

Central Vertigo

It refers to problems within your brain or brainstem. It may occur gradually or suddenly with mild intensity mostly but can be severe in stroke and multiple sclerosis. It may be caused due to Stroke, tumors, Vestibular migraine, multiple sclerosis.

Peripheral Vertigo

It results due to the problem within the inner ear areas called vestibular labyrinth, or semicircular canals that controls balance. Its onset is sudden with severe intensity initially and may decrease over time. It may be caused by benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), head injury, neuronitis, labyrinthitis, Meniere disease, meningioma, etc.

Before a patient approaches to vertigo clinic for assessment, it is must to understand what patient mean by dizziness whether it is true vertigo or dizziness. These causes of vertigo and dizziness can be ruled out with the help of Vestibulo-ocular and Vestibulospinal reflexes.

Vestibulo-ocular Reflex

It is gaze stabilizing reflex which coordinate head and neck movement with the trunk and body, with the goal of maintaining the head in an upright position.

Vestibulospinal reflexes

It helps in stimulating labyrinthine receptors and aims at stabilizing posture.