VESTIBULAR DISORDERS: AN OVERVIEW

The vestibular system includes the parts of the inner ear and brain that process sensory information involved with controlling balance and eye movements. Vestibular disorders may result when these areas are damaged.

PREVALENCE

35% of adults aged 40 years or older in the US have experienced some form of vestibular dysfunction.

Vertigo from a vestibular problem accounts for 1/3 of all dizziness and vertigo symptoms reported to health care professionals.

SYMPTOMS

Intensity: Mild-Severe
Duration: Seconds-Constant
- Imbalance/unsteadiness
- Vertigo (spinning sensation)
- Dizziness (lightheadedness, floating, or rocking sensation)
- Blurred or bouncing vision
- Nausea
- Hearing changes/tinnitus (constant ringing)
- Lack of coordination
- Problems with thinking and memory

CAUSES

- Head injuries
- Sudden or significant pressure changes
- Viral or bacterial infections
- High doses or long-term use of certain medications

TESTING

- Medical history
- Physical examination
- Hearing test
- CT or MRI scan
- Videonystagmography (VNG)
- Balance testing
- Computerized dynamic posturography (CDP)

TREATMENT

- Vestibular rehabilitation therapy
- Vision therapy
- Medications
- Surgery
- Diet & lifestyle changes

References