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BPPV

Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV) is the most common form of balance disorder diagnosed in 40% of cases presenting to health care providers. Fortunately **BPPV** is relatively simple to diagnose and treat with benefit arising instantly in 80% of interventions. BPPV may recur, however retreatment continues to work effectively.

BPPV Causation

Calcium carbonate crystals, known as **otoconia**, become displaced from their normal position above the Utricle of the balance organ and enter the **Posterior Semi Circular Canal (PSSC)**. Crystals can enter other semicircular canals but it is the Posterior canal that is mostly involved due to its anatomical predisposition. Head movement in specific planes then induces the displaced otoconia to move within the Posterior Semicircular Canal inducing the sensation of Vertigo and the compensatory eye movements known as nystagmus. BPPV is a mechanical malfunction of the inner ear does not reflect an ongoing disease process.

BPPV Symptoms

Classically, rolling over in bed, laying down or looking up induces the sensation of Vertigo in BPPV. There exists a short latency period after the movement before the vertigo commences. The vertigo crescendos and then fatigues within about 15-45 seconds before the sensation of stability returns.

BPPV Diagnosis and Treatment.

BPPV can often be diagnosed on the history alone. The diagnosis can be confirmed by use of the **Hallpike Manoeuvre**. The Hallpike requires the patient to be moved in a particular manner that places a load on the Posterior Semicircular Canal to induce vertiginous symptoms as well as permitting an observer to visualize the presence or absence of nystagmus in the patient's eyes.

The Hallpike Manoeuvre described above is the first step in the treatment process known as the **Epley Manoeuvre**. It is important that the correct ear is diagnosed so treatment is applied to the affected ear. Mistreatment can lead to "ear switching" complicating matters. As a consequence, whilst some patients under careful guidance can sometimes manage the Epley Manoeuvre themselves, this is best administered by your treating physician, physiotherapist or audiologist.

ACE Audiology, as well as providing general diagnostic hearing assessment and hearing aid dispensing services, also performs the Hallpike and Epley manoeuvre to diagnose and treat BPPV. Please feel free to contact our clinic on 03 9850 8888 should our services be of interest to you.