

The Dizziness, Balance and Vertigo Report



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Concussion and Vestibular Rehabilitation

This edition of the dizziness and balance report is particularly timely, in light of recent high profile discussions about the potential benefits of vestibular rehabilitation for post concussive symptoms.



Highlight on Research

Alsalaheen, Bara A. PT, et al. Vestibular Rehabilitation for Dizziness and Balance Disorders After Concussion. Journal of Neurologic Physical Therapy: June 2010 - Volume 34 - Issue 2 - pp 87-93

The authors of this study sought to examine the effect of vestibular rehabilitation in reducing dizziness and in improving gait and balance function in people after concussion.

The study was a retrospective chart review of 114 patients referred for vestibular rehabilitation following concussion. Subjective (Dizziness Handicap Inventory, Dizziness Severity, Activities specific Balance Confidence Scale) and objective (Dynamic Gait Index, Gait Speed, Sensory Organization Test) measures at initial visit and upon discharge were analyzed.

Of the 84 patients who had at least one follow-up visit, improvements were observed in all self-report, gait, and balance performance measures at the time of discharge. Children improved by a greater amount in dizziness severity and conditions 1 (eyes open, fixed support) and 2 (eyes closed, fixed support) of the Sensory Organization Test.

The authors concluded that “Vestibular rehabilitation should be considered in the management of individuals post concussion who have dizziness and gait and balance dysfunction that do not resolve with rest.”



What can be done to help?

Vestibular Rehabilitation offers a simple, evidence based, home program of exercises for post concussive patients, including:

- Retraining the gain of the vestibulo-ocular reflex (VOR) by engaging eye and head movement exercises
- Improving central substitution patterns
- Habituating to movement patterns that exacerbate symptoms
- Static and dynamic balance retraining exercises with eyes open and eyes closed
- Functional retraining and general strengthening/conditioning
- Monitoring exertion level and heart rate while returning to sport/activity

Vestibular Rehabilitation can be provided by your Physiotherapist at
Kanata Orthopaedic Physiotherapy Clinic

Sandeep Kulkarni is a registered physiotherapist. For the past 6 years, his practice has been focused mainly in the field of vestibular rehabilitation. He is a graduate of the Emory University Vestibular Certification Program (Dr. Herdman et al), and has participated in numerous post graduate training courses in the field. He has taught primers in vestibular rehabilitation in a variety of rehabilitation settings over the past 6 years.



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