



The Fourth Scientific Meeting of Brain Disorders
SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF DIAGNOSIS
AND TREATMENT OF VERTIGO



Guest Editor
VIDA DEMARIN





EDITORIAL

The position of the body in space is controlled by the ocular, vestibular and somatosensory systems. A mismatch of this sensory information causes vertigo. Vertigo is defined as a hallucination of movement or erroneous perception of self or object motion, i.e. vertigo is the illusion of motion, most often rotational motion. It is usually an unpleasant sensation due to the distortion of the static gravitational orientation perceived by the cortical spatial perceptual system. Vertigo is usually associated with difficulties in balance and gait, with nausea, vomiting, and nystagmus. However, patients with vertigo may also complain of dizziness, lightheadedness, unsteadiness, imbalance, spinning, floating, and swaying.

There are a variety of causes of vertigo: it can be caused by an inner ear disturbance producing peripheral vertigo, by a central disturbance producing central vertigo, by systemic diseases, or it can be psychogenic. The most common causes of vertigo include benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, acute vestibular neuronitis, Ménière's disease, migraine, anxiety disorders, vertebrobasilar ischemia and tumors of the pontocerebellar angle. It is important to distinct between peripheral, central and psychogenic vertigo in order to guide management decisions.

Vertigo is among the most common symptoms causing patients to visit a physician, almost as common as back pain and headache. As patients become older the incidence of vertigo increases. Today, as the average lifespan increases and there is an ever growing proportion of elderly patients who are more prone to vertiginous symptoms, it is expected that the incidence of vertigo will continuously increase in the everyday medical practice.

Because vertigo is so common and there are so many causes of vertigo from the benign to severe ones, the Department of Medical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts had decided to organize the Fourth Scientific Meeting on Brain Disorders: Scientific Basis of Diagnosis and Treatment of Vertigo that was held on Thursday, March 16, 2006, in the Illyrian Hall of the National House, Zagreb, Croatia. Many recognized practitioners and scientists delivered lectures on the diagnosis and treatment of different forms of vertigo, presenting a comprehensive interdisciplinary overview of vertigo.

This meeting was so well attended that it was decided to publish lectures held on the meeting, as well as some additional scientific results of work recently done on vertigo diagnosis at the University Department of Neurology, Sestre Milosrdnice University Hospital.

Therefore, this issue presents the most important lectures from this meeting and some recently finished scientific papers about vertigo. We hope that in this issue of the journal every physician who wants to know more and is interested to find additional information about the diagnosis and treatment of vertigo will find some valuable information about this common symptom and its diagnosis.

Vida Demarin