



Topic

Techniques for Managing Vestibular Migraine

Title & Organization

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Vestibular migraine is an atypical type of migraine in which dizziness, disorientation, and vertigo are predominant symptoms, sometimes even without headache.
- Sumatriptan is about 50% effective in about half of patients with vestibular migraine.
- Many preventives used for chronic migraine are also used for vestibular migraine.
- Many patients with vestibular migraine also have anxiety. Low-dose clonazepam might be helpful for them.
- Vestibular therapy can be helpful for some patients with vestibular migraine, but it may need to be limited to brief sessions of 10 minutes or less. The therapy can even be done at home in short doses.
- Some patients have an enhanced perception of balance, resulting in a fear of motion.
- Vestibular therapy can habituate patients to motion so they feel less dizzy.
- In some patients, vestibular migraine causes a weakening of the inner ear and loss of balance. Therapy focuses on substituting vision and other senses to improve steadiness.

QUOTES

“A patient with vestibular migraine, with an activated vestibular nucleus, may find that just simple motions of the head are exaggerated.”

“Imagine a row of dominoes — when a patient with migraine has this first domino, and once it goes over, a long sequence begins. And you just have to hope you can interrupt it. That sequence is kind of like a chemical spill, and the best way to treat a chemical spill is to stop it as early as possible. So this is the reason some patients, even with vestibular migraine, at the very first sign of trouble, if they take something, they can eliminate a whole day of misery.”

“Almost all of our vestibular migraine patients have symptoms 15 days a month or more. And if you're having that many episodes, you're far better off trying to prevent them than trying to stamp out the fire when it's there.”

TREATMENTS CITED

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| Benzodiazepines (diazepam and clonazepam) | Meclizine |
| Calcium channel blockers (verapamil, diltiazem) | Melatonin |
| CoQ10 | Tricyclic antidepressants (amitriptyline, nortriptyline) |
| Gepants | Triptans |
| Lifestyle management | Sodium channel blockers (Depakote, topiramate) |
| Magnesium (oxide, aspartate, gluconate, citrate) | Vestibular therapy |
| | Vitamin B2 |

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Try to lower your threshold of vestibular migraine with rest; stress management; and avoiding dehydration, hunger, and food triggers.
- Keep your body toned to expand your cone of stability.
- If vestibular therapy is not helpful initially, you might try again later.
- Alternative remedies for vestibular migraine include melatonin, herbal sleep aids, magnesium, CoQ10, and riboflavin (vitamin B2).
- Learn more about vestibular migraine from Dr. Teixido's YouTube channel.
- Seek out providers and physical therapists with expertise in vestibular migraine.