

Causes of dizziness among elderly patients

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The aim of this work was to find out the rate of the commonest cause of dizziness amongst patients attending the out-patient clinic of the geriatric medicine department, Ain-Shams University. None of the cases had acute systemic decompensation e.g. acute heart failure. All cases were freshly diagnosed.

Each case was interviewed individually.

A set of investigations and tests were common to all subjects and this included base line ECG and laboratory tests (RBS, serum cholesterol, serum creatinine and CBC). Further investigations were directed by individual requirement of the case as determined from the medical history and clinical examination.

All cases underwent pure tone audiometry and electronystagmography. Further vestibular testing was conducted as indicated by individual requirements of the case as determined from the medical history, clinical examination and other vestibular tests.

The study was conducted on 100 patients, 52 males and 48 females. Amongst the cases there were 34 cases of dizziness due to vestibulobasilar ischemia, 23 cases due to paroxysmal positional vertigo, 12 cases due to peripheral neuropathy, 8 cases due to cerebrovascular strokes, 6 cases due to vestibular neuronitis, 5 cases due to vasovagal syncope, 4 cases due to brain stem infarctions or TIAs, 2 cases due to migraine and 6 cases in which diagnosis remained unknown.

These results show that the commonest cause was vascular insufficiency and that vestibular lesions occurred in a substantially large number of cases exceeded that normally expected for it.