

Example of GPs script:

Patient contribution

So what can I help you with?

Oh dear, and when did that set off?

Ok, so your balance and your dizziness is bothering you. Apart from that is there anything else you were hoping to get from today?

So how do you find this is affecting you?

ICE

Any idea what might be causing it?

And what was it the last time that made you get better?

What did the doctors say it was?

Okay, but they didn't give a name for it or a reason?

Ok, and what were you thinking I would do for you today?

Ok, so you're after some medication.

PSO

So how is life otherwise?

Ok, and work-wise what are you doing these days?

Oh that's right. And how is he?

Ok and is it just the two of you in the house?

Ok and are you a smoker?

Ok, so he needs your support for quite a lot of things then. And have we done a carers health review with you at any stage?

Red flags

So your general health is ok?

And your mood has been ok recently?

Can I just check, do you get dizzy when you stand up?

And have you even fainted?

And you don't have any breathlessness or chest pain?

And you haven't travelled recently?

And we haven't changed your medication have we? You are still taking paroxetine and that seems to be working well for you?

And you aren't taking ibuprofen or aspirin with it?

And have you ever had any episodes of black poo or upper abdominal pain?

Focussed history

Right, so it's when you're moving, that you feel off balance?

Is this the first time this has happened?

Ok, and does anything else happen with it? Any other symptoms?

But you've been quite well in yourself. No change in your hearing?

And no buzzing in your ears, or discharge from them?

Ok, so just to get a better idea of what the problem is: I'm going to ask a few other questions to rule out some possible causes of your symptoms. Have you had a fever at all?

Do you drive?

Focussed examination

Ok, so I'm going to start by having a look in your ears and in your throat, and also check your hearing is ok. Your ears look healthy inside, and you can close your mouth. And I will have a look in your nose, to check there isn't any congestion or polyps. Can you tell me what I'm saying when I whisper in your ear.

Ok, so your hearing is very good. Ok, I'll just check your blood pressure to make sure that's in a normal kind of range.....So that's fine when you're sitting down....and when you're standing it doesn't drop at all which is good. So, now if you can stand up straight, close your eyes and put your hands out in front of you. Now I won't let you fall over, but if you can just stand straight and try and figure out where you are in space. Ok, fine. So, if you open your eyes now, and walk in a straight line, heel to toe, heel to toe, as if you were walking on a tightrope. Ok, that's great. And now if you can just sit up on the couch and I'm going to try and make you dizzy. This may actually be a treatment for this sort of dizziness. I want you to bring your legs up so that you can swing them easily over the bed to sit up. This is a test called the Hallpike test and checks whether you are dizzy with certain head movements. You already mentioned that certain head movements bring the dizziness on. Usually when you get this dizziness how long does it last?

Is there a particular direction you turn your head that makes it start?

So it's when you turn your head to the right. In that case I'm going to turn your head towards me (to the right), and then lie you back down onto the bed and that will probably make you feel quite dizzy. Lie back now onto the pillow and I'm going to put your head a bit below the bed. And now look at my finger. That should make you feel quite dizzy.

Yes, I can see your eyes flickering a bit there. That is the typical response with a balance problem like this. So, you have crystals inside your ears, balance organs which when they move can make you feel like your moving, even if you are still. So, I'm going to try and get them out. This is called the Epley manoeuvre. Benign positional vertigo is a harmless condition where the crystals are in the wrong place, and I'm just going to try and empty them out.

So now can turn your head towards my finger. YouTube has a great video, showing you how to do this manoeuvre yourself. Now that is the second part of the manoeuvre done. Do you feel any dizziness with that?

Ok, I'm going to keep you in that position for about 30 seconds. Now I would like you to turn your whole body to face that wall and now look at my finger, which is in the direction of that wall opposite you. Keep in that position for 30 seconds if you will. Okay, the next part, if you sit up, keep your legs flat on the bed but look to the wall on your left. Is that making you feel dizzy?

So let me know when that dizziness is starting to improve. Is it getting any better now?

Ok we will have to be a bit more patient. Is it any better now?

So that's the fourth position of the Epley manoeuvre. Is it settled completely?

So if you can look straight down in front of you, into your lap, this is the last part. I'm going to keep your looking down for about 30 seconds. Feeling comfortable? It might be a bit uncomfortable when you first stand up having done that, but when you're ready if you just come and have a sit at my desk and we will have a chat about it.

Identify problem

I am certain you have a condition called benign positional vertigo. So I'm now going to do a treatment on you that may even cure this without tablets. So, you have crystals inside your ears, balance organs which when they move can make you feel

like your moving, even if you are still. Benign positional vertigo is a harmless condition where the crystals are in the wrong place.

Check understanding

So you're going to tell Neil about this when you get home? And what will you tell him about what the problem is?

Do you have any questions?

Develops management plan / shares management plan

So I'm now going to do a treatment on you that may even cure this without tablets.

So, I'm going to try and get them out. This is called the Epley manoeuvre.

Safety net and follow up

Would you be keen to read some more about this?

Ok, so if you look into patient.info and look up this condition, it will tell you a bit more about it. It usually causes vertigo that lasts less than a minute. We don't really know why, sometimes it's related to viral infections and colds. It is possible that it will come back again, and if that is the case I'm more than happy for you to come in and do that manoeuvre for you again. Or if the manoeuvre is not working particularly well, we can give you some tablets that will sedate your balance organs. If you're getting a change in your hearing, a buzzing in your ear, or persistent vertigo, these signs suggest that there's a different cause for your vertigo and we will need to look again for the underlying problem. So like I say I'm happy to see you again if you need, but you could also try to learn to do the Epley Manoeuvre for yourself on YouTube. Does that sound ok?