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Home-Based Vestibular Exercises

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Dizziness is one of the most common symptoms encountered in otolaryngology practice, with an increasing prevalence with patient's age. Among the types of dizziness, vertigo is associated with a lower quality of life and more significant health care burden. For these complaints, medications are preferred by ENTs and are commonly given to patients with no consistent encouraging clinical outcomes.

Vestibular exercises may be a promising option for dizzy patients. In the local setting however, exercises seem to be less favored by clinicians due to lack of local vestibular rehabilitation therapists including the complexities of the lengthy referral and appointment processes. On the other hand, patients fear that exercises may have no benefit and may only trigger vertigo attacks.

Currently, there is a consensus among specialists worldwide that exercise-based vestibular therapy is an effective management for vestibular dysfunction. This therapeutic approach is founded on patients performing various levels of exercises consisting of repetitive movements of the eyes, head, and body that aim to simulate the vestibular system, in the hope of facilitating central compensatory mechanisms.

The presentation will highlight simple vestibular exercises, which are substantiated by current recommendations and scientific evidence. These may be administered or taught by otolaryngologists in their clinics to properly-selected dizzy patients.

These exercises may be done by patients at home or in the workplace, thereby solving problems associated with the lack of trained professionals, increasing therapeutic costs, and dealing with the appointment process. The exercises are also intended to help patients return to their pre-morbid conditions, as much as possible, giving them a better quality of life – bringing back their confidence and balance skills with no fear and avoidance.