·)) Canadian Audiologist

BPPV-Stat Sheet

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This week, we are going to take a quick look at some (at least to me) startling and depressing statistics related to Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo. Each will be linked to the abstract if you want further detail. I will be exploring current management of BPPV over the next few weeks.

1. Two recent studies explored the time period from initial presentation of symptoms of BPPV to correct diagnosis. Fife and Fitzgerald report that in the United Kingdom, the mean wait time from initial presentation to correct diagnosis was 92 weeks. A more recent study out of China found the delay to be longer than 70 months.

2. In both studies mentioned above, the subjects were treated with Canalith repositioning (CRP) once the diagnosis of BPPV was made. In the Chinese study over 80% were successfully treated with one CRP, while the Fife and Fitzgerald study reports 85% were successfully treated.

[Editors note: I don't know about you, but this blows my mind. This indicates that the average person with BPPV goes years before they are diagnosed correctly, then over 80% are successfully treated on the day they are diagnosed. We know BPPV is common. It is easy and inexpensive to diagnose and treat, yet the inefficiencies of the health care systems seem determined to ignore this. Is it any better in the United States?]

3. Katsarkis (1994) reported that more than one third of 1194 patients seen for the complaint of "dizziness" were found to have "confirmed or strongly suspected" benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV)

4. Oghali (2000) reports that 9% of the general geriatric population has BPPV at any given time

5. Despite the high incidence of BPPV, testing for positional vertigo is still rare (<10%) in the primary care setting (Polensek, 2008)

[Editors note: All three of these studies are from the United States. We will continue with this stat sheet next week, and explore treatment options]