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The Efficacy of Vestibular Rehabilitation in the Treatment of the Elderly With Vestibular Symptomatology

Souza Neta, H.H¹; Veras, A.R.A.L²; Aguiar, I.P¹; Franco e Santos, S.N.S¹; Costa, S.M.S¹; Silva, V.R¹.

¹Students of the Speech Therapy Course of the University Center of João Pessoa- UNIPÊ.

²Speech Therapist, Master, Teacher of the Speech Therapy Course at Faculty São Miguel – PE.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Changes in structures and systems of the human body through the process of senescence are responsible for frequent complaints in the elderly population, among which are those of dizziness, vertigo and imbalance. The aging of the vestibular, visual, somatosensory, musculoskeletal and central nervous systems mainly affects the postural control, being this of fundamental importance for the autonomy of these individuals. Vestibular rehabilitation aims to improve the overall balance, quality of life and spatial orientation of patients with dizziness. **Objective:** To verify the efficacy of vestibular rehabilitation in the treatment of elderly patients with symptoms of vestibular alterations. **Methods:** We conducted extensive research and selected articles published between 2012 and 2016, indexed in the databases SciELO, PubMed, MEDLINE and LILACS. The following keywords were selected in Portuguese: Speech Therapy, Elderly and Vestibular Rehabilitation. **Results and discussion:** Currently vestibular rehabilitation is increasingly being indicated in the treatment of vestibular dysfunction, as it is also being prescribed for individuals who present alterations related to balance and spatial orientation. The main peripheral vestibular disorders prevalent in the elderly are: Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo; Menière's syndrome; Vestibular neuritis and persistent perceptual postural dizziness (subjective chronic dizziness). The treatment of coexisting pathologies is also fundamentally important for the success of the therapy. **Conclusion:** Vestibular rehabilitation was shown to be an effective and viable alternative for vestibular symptomatology in the elderly. It is a satisfactory strategy to treat or minimize vestibular alterations, as well as improvement in anxiety, depression, static and dynamic balance and reduction of the quality of life and social interaction of this population. However, the practice of vestibular rehabilitation has not yet become routine in many speech-language rehabilitation services.

Keywords:

Speech therapy; Elderly; Vestibular Rehabilitation.

*Correspondence to Author:

Veras, A.R.A.L

Speech Therapist, Master, Teacher of the Speech Therapy Course at Faculty São Miguel – PE.

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