

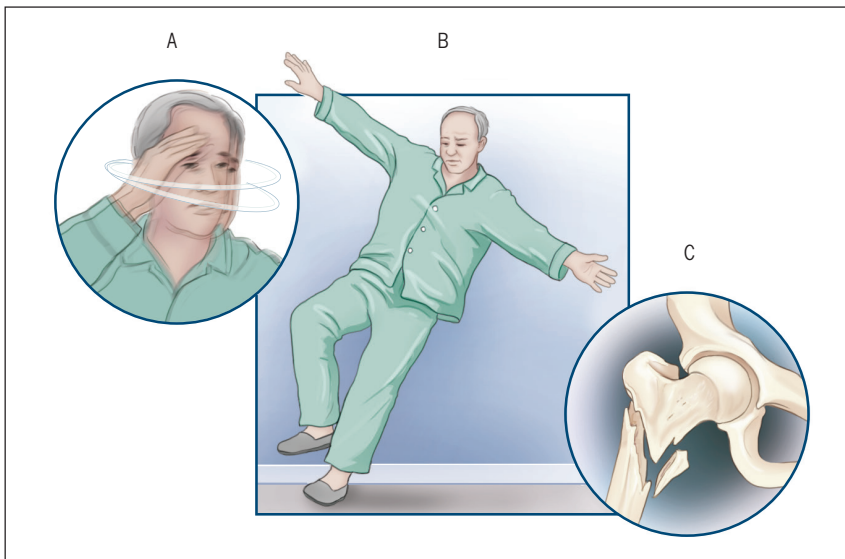
Dizziness

Increased Risk for Fractures

J Orthop Sports Phys Ther 2015;45(5):413. doi:10.2519/jospt.2015.0502

Dizziness is a common problem that can affect a person at any age. There are many reasons for dizziness, some more serious than others. One common, easily treatable cause of transient dizziness is called “benign paroxysmal positional vertigo,” or BPPV. Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo causes dizziness related to head movement and position and is due to a problem in the in-

ner ear. Dizziness can negatively affect one’s quality of life and is associated with an increased risk of falls. This may be especially problematic for older people, who have a greater chance of falling and breaking bones. Recovering from a fracture can be particularly difficult for someone who is elderly. A study published in the May 2015 issue of *JOSPT* investigated whether BPPV is associated with an increased risk of falls that result in fractures.



DIZZINESS FROM BPPV AND ASSOCIATED FALLS AND FRACTURES. A diagnosis of dizziness from BPPV (A) was associated with an increased risk of falling (B) and breaking bones (C), especially for older people.

This *JOSPT* Perspectives for Patients is based on an article by Liao et al titled “Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo Is Associated With an Increased Risk of Fracture: A Population-Based Cohort Study” (*J Orthop Sports Phys Ther 2015;45(5):406-412. doi:10.2519/jospt.2015.5707*).

This Perspectives article was written by a team of *JOSPT*’s editorial board and staff, with Deydre S. Teyhen, PT, PhD, Editor, and Jeanne Robertson, Illustrator.

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NEW INSIGHTS

Researchers in Taiwan studied 3796 individuals who had just been diagnosed with dizziness from BPPV and compared them to 15184 people without a history of dizziness. The researchers evaluated the risk of fractures in both groups by following these individuals for up to 12 years. The data indicated that overall, those with BPPV were at a higher risk of fractures during the 12-year period after their diagnosis. The added risk of fractures was particularly seen for the spine, ribs, and pelvis region. When looking at age groups more closely, the diagnosis of BPPV was especially related to a greater risk of fractures for both men and women over the age of 65.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Although we knew that dizziness increased the risk of falling, this study shows that BPPV-related dizziness is also associated with increased risk of fractures from those falls. Fractures of the spine, ribs, and pelvis region limit movement and activity, which increases the risk of other health issues. If you feel dizzy, you should let your health care provider know. Proper evaluation is very important, first to determine the cause of the dizziness. Many causes are treatable, including BPPV. Based on careful evaluation, the proper treatment for dizziness could decrease the risks of falling and breaking bones. For more information on the treatment of dizziness, contact your physical therapist specializing in musculoskeletal disorders and vestibular rehabilitation.

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