

# IN BALANCE

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<http://www.medoto.unimelb.edu.au/oto/vestibular.html>

## Free Vestibular Rehabilitation

The Vestibular Investigation Unit has recently acquired funding from the Deafness Foundation and the Eye and Ear Hospital to investigate a pilot vestibular rehabilitation program. The study aims are:

- (1) To investigate the efficacy of providing vestibular rehabilitation at the RVEEH to patient's identified as having an inner ear dysfunction.
- (2) To establish whether an unsupervised home program of vestibular exercises customised to the patient based on the results of the physiotherapy assessment is more effective than an unsupervised home program of generalised strength and endurance exercises

**Patient Criteria:** Patients reporting symptoms of motion induced dizziness/vertigo (+/- dizziness at rest) and/or disequilibrium and/or gaze instability that are having a negative effect on lifestyle, and evidence of vestibular dysfunction noted in the vestibular function assessment.

**Study Summary:** Patients involved in the study receive a free program of treatment from a physiotherapist who is experienced in the area of vestibular rehabilitation. Due to it being a study there is a control group, but benefits are expected for both groups. Patients will need to commit to an 8 week program of home exercises and attend 4 physiotherapy appointments within the 8 week period. Patients first undergo audiovestibular testing at the Vestibular Investigation Unit. If an inner ear dysfunction is identified they are randomly assigned to a treatment group or a control group.

Both groups undergo a full vestibular physiotherapy assessment (90 mins duration). At the end of the assessment both groups are provided with a physiotherapy home exercise program to be performed 3 x daily, and receive 2 follow-up physiotherapy reviews to modify/progress the home exercise program as appropriate, and provide education. The treatment group receives a program of individualised vestibular rehabilitation exercises (gaze stability, habituation and balance) where as the control group receives a set of 5 generalised exercises (designed to work on strength and endurance only). Patients assigned to the control group will still receive the benefit of an active program.

The patients continue with the home exercise program for approx. 8 – 10 weeks. They are reviewed several

times during the 10 week program, and are followed up at 6 months. (Patients who were assigned to the control group will receive or be referred on for vestibular rehabilitation if indicated).

**Who Can Refer:** Any specialist and clinic that refer patients for vestibular function assessment at the Vestibular Investigation Unit Send referral to the Vestibular Investigation Unit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, RVEEH requesting assessment for vestibular rehabilitation.

**For further information contact ph: 9929 8740**

## Research Update

An Audiology Masters student is currently undertaking a minor research project investigating the ABR and VEMP tests in patients with Multiple Sclerosis. If you have any patients that have MS (suspected or definite) please refer them in to us using our regular referral pads. A report will be sent to you detailing the neural integrity of the auditory brainstem and vestibulocolic pathways which potentially could be a valuable way to document the progression of MS or even detect functional abnormalities that haven't shown up on a MRI.

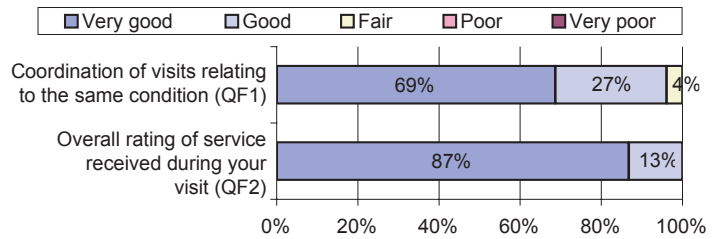
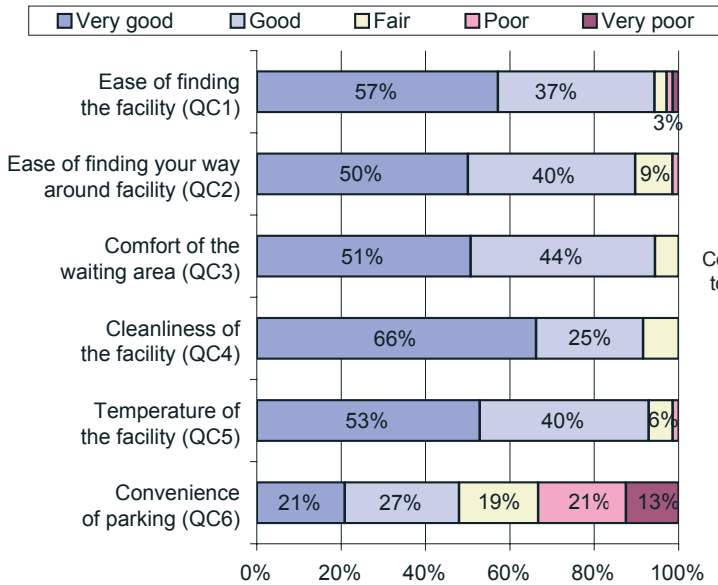
## Epley manoeuvre

A short video demonstrating how to do the Epley manoeuvre can now be viewed on the internet. Anyone can view this video by following the link provided in the article written by Dr Mark Paine titled "*Dealing With Dizziness*" published in the August edition of Australian Prescriber, Volume 28, Number 4, August 2005. Access to [www.australianprescriber.com](http://www.australianprescriber.com) is free. You might recognise some of our staff members in this video!

## Welcome back

We would like to welcome back Joanne Enticott as our Vestibular Services coordinator. She and her husband had a healthy baby boy, Toby (pictured) in November last year.





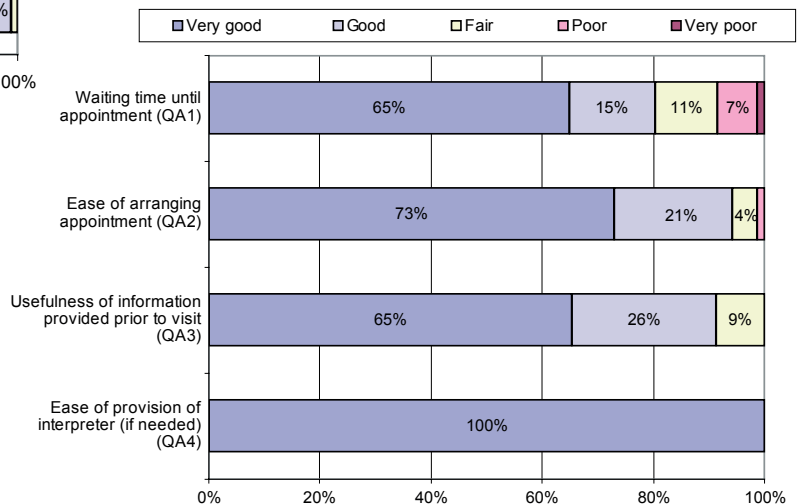
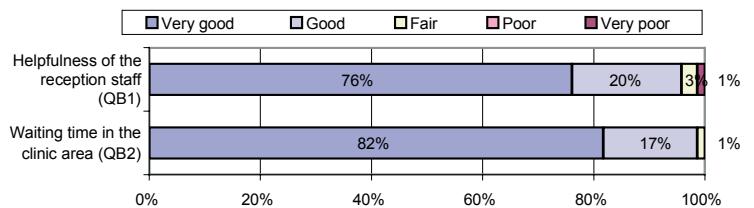
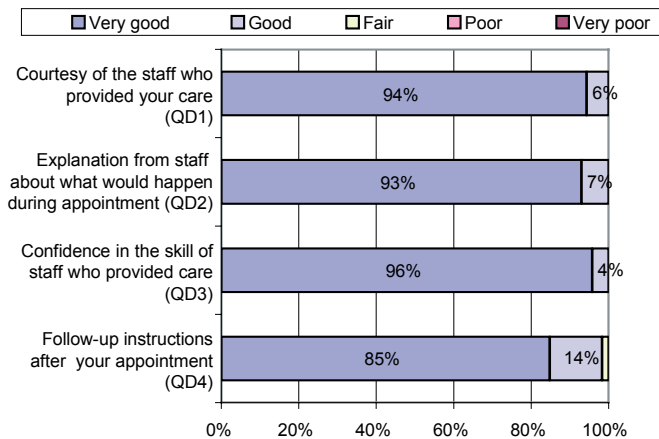
## Patient Satisfaction

Anxiety is a word that comes to mind when we think of what our patients feel **before** they come in for their balance tests. Many of these people go away saying, "it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be". One patient actually wanted to "go again".

There is a lot of misconception about what vestibular function testing involves. A summary of the recent patient satisfaction questionnaires is shown below, demonstrating the belief that vestibular

function tests are uncomfortable for the majority of patients is untrue.

One hundred and ninety-six patients were seen in the VIU within a 2-month data collection time frame. 71 questionnaires were analysed giving a response rate of 42%. The mean patient age was 35-49 years, 70% female and 30% male patients. Julia Quinlivan, a former Audiology Masters student, devised and analysed these questionnaires.



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