

Mal de Debarquement syndrome

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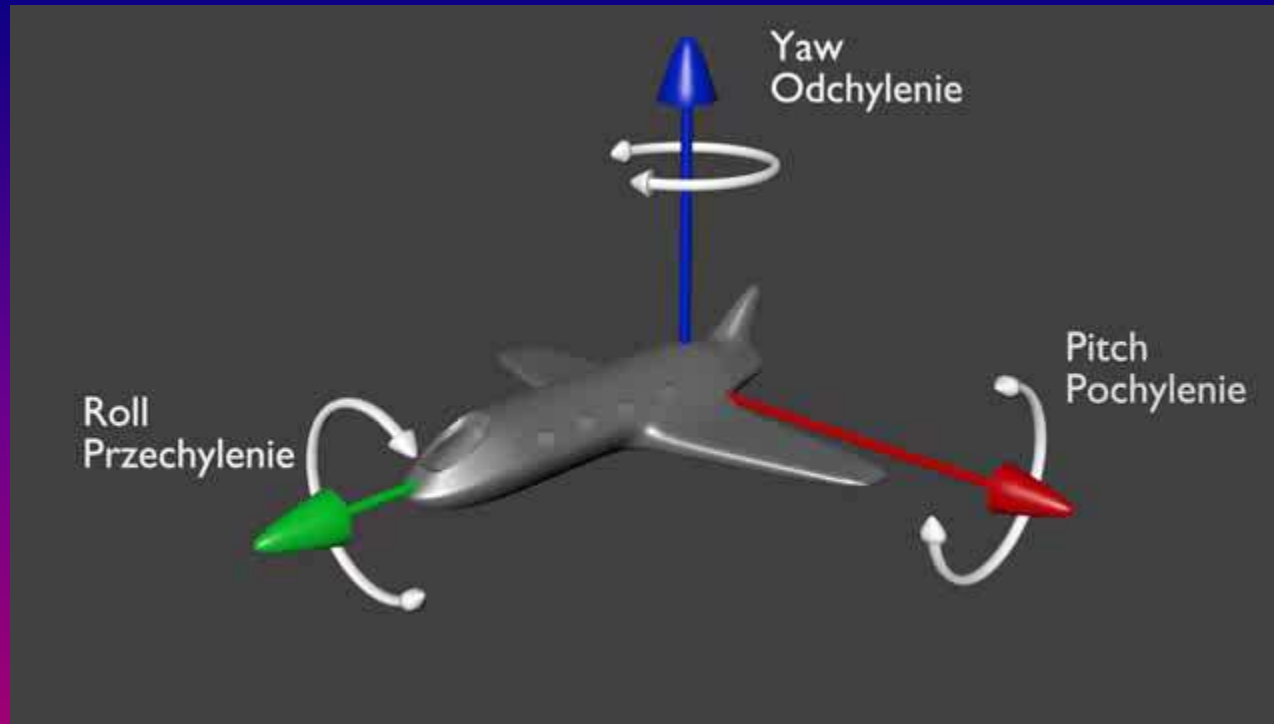
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Definition

Mal de Debarquement or Disembarkation syndrome is a condition characterised by a rocking or a swaying sensation due to a maladaptation of the translational and angular vestibulo ocular reflex

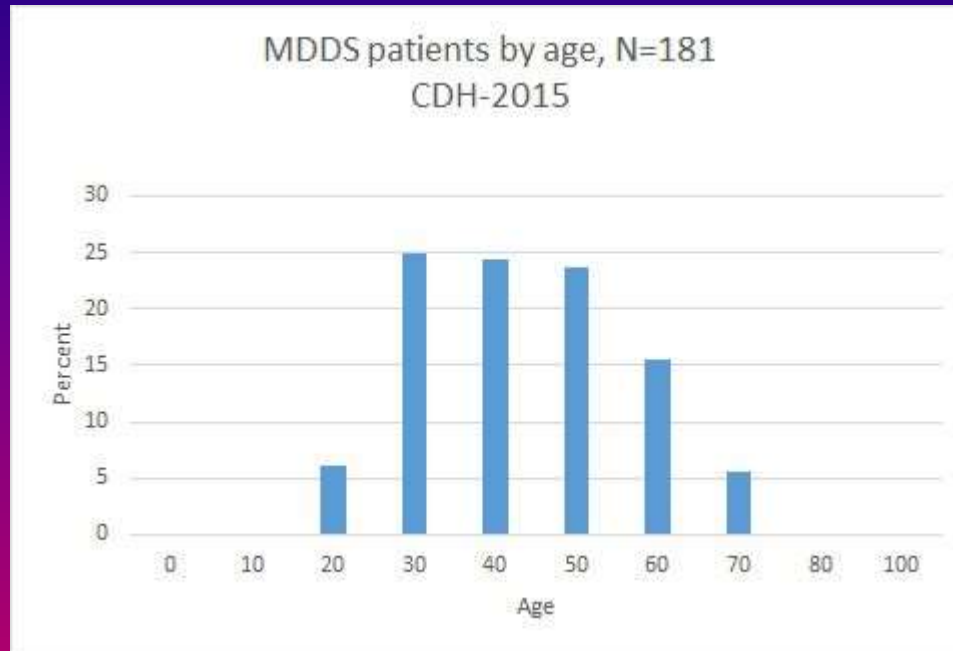
Pathophysiology



- Cross axis coupled stimulus maladaptation
- Internal predictive model failure
- Fundamental brain changes

Clinical features and diagnosis

- Usually middle aged women

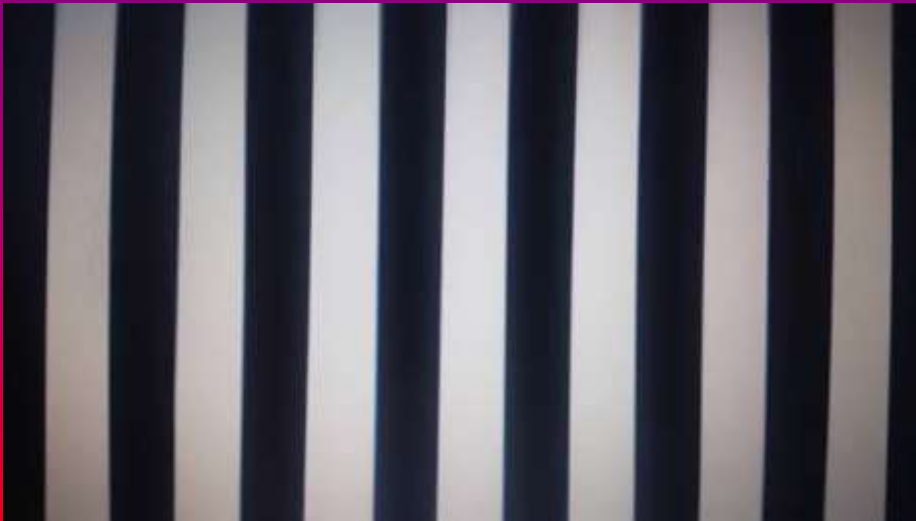


- Mean duration of symptoms 2.5 years
- There may or may not be a history of travel
- There is usually a history of some kind of non physiological movement

- Chronic rocking/bobbing/swaying dizziness that started after either passive motion or exposure to virtual reality
- Symptoms lasting for at least 1 month
- Normal inner ear function or unrelated abnormalities on ENG/VNG or audiological testing
- Betterment of symptoms in moving objects
- Normal structural brain imaging
- Symptoms not better accounted for by another diagnosis
- Other symptoms include 'brain fog', autonomic symptoms, visual vertigo and bizarre disorientation ('ground rushing,' 'walking on wool')
- Significant anxiety

Management

- Full vestibular test battery
- Imaging – CT and MRI
- Anxiety and stress management
- Optokinetic stimulation under active rotation
- Pharmacological – SSRI inhibitors or benzodiazepines



Our experience



- 7 patients
- 5 with excellent results; 1 with no change and 1 worsening
- All received anxiety and stress management

Conclusions

- MdDS is not a psychological but a real distressing condition
- Holistic MDT is required to treat the condition

