

Balance and gait disorders in a memory clinic population

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Cognitive and gait disorders are common in the elderly. Poor gait performance has been shown to predict the occurrence of dementia. However, there has been no studies looking at the association between gait performance and memory impairment in outpatient clinic setting. We have therefore investigated balance and gait performance among patients attending the memory disorders clinic, the only clinic in Northern Tasmania. 408 consecutive patients enrolled in the study between 2010 and 2014 following referral by medical practitioners. All patients had detailed history of memory, balance and gait symptoms including features suggesting dementia. A full examination included the Mini-Mental state examination and balance/gait functions by standing with eyes closed, on toes, and walking on straight line. All patients had brain CT scan. 182 (44.6%) had mild cognitive impairment, 91 (22.3%) had Alzheimer's disease, 62 (15.2%) had idiopathic normal pressure hydrocephalus, 24 (5.9%) had mixed dementia, 11 (2.7%) had vascular dementia, 9 (2.2%) had parkinsonism, 4 (1%) had frontal lobe dementia, 2 (0.5%) had Lewy body dementia and 23 (5.6%) had

other dementia syndromes. 212 (52%) of patients had balance and gait problems, of whom 72% had difficulty standing with eyes closed, 94% standing on toes, 97% walking on straight line. We conclude that balance and gait dysfunctions are associated strongly with cognitive impairment in memory clinic population.

Biography

George Razay is General Physician, Geriatrician and the Director of the Dementia Research Centre at the Launceston General Hospital. He has extensive research experience in Australia and the UK in the field of Alzheimer's disease, especially in the role of vascular risk factors. His early research explored the role of lipids and insulin in relation to alcohol consumption, smoking, obesity, menopause, and Alzheimer's disease. His recent research investigated the role of obesity, the metabolic syndrome and blood pressure in Alzheimer's disease, and the prevalence and treatment of idiopathic Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus. His research has been presented at national and international meetings and had been published in international journals.

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