Vertigo vs. Lightheadedness

- Vertigo: When a person feels as if they or the objects around them are moving when they are not. It often feels like a spinning motion. May be associated with nausea/vomiting. Commonly an ear/nerve complaint

- Lightheadedness: a feeling that one may faint. Sometimes you feel woozy when you stand up too fast. Commonly a cardiovascular complaint

Approach to Vertigo

1. Is the description typical of CENTRAL vertigo?
   Central Vertigo: mild, vague, non-specific
   Peripheral Vertigo: Severe, sudden, lots of nausea/vomiting

2. Are the associated symptoms typical for CENTRAL vertigo?
   (The Dangerous D’s)
   a. Diplopia: double vision
   b. Dysphagia: trouble swallowing
   c. Dysmetria: difficulty moving/walking
   d. Dysarthria: difficulty speaking

3. Does this patient have risk factors associated with CENTRAL vertigo?
   Risk factors for stroke (old age)/trauma (recent MVA/fall)

4. Is the neuro exam consistent with CENTRAL vertigo?

5. Treat
   a. Signs of Central: MRI, CT of Head/neck
   b. Signs of Peripheral: Meclizine

References