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Audiovestibular Medicine

Nature of the work

Audiovestibular medicine (formerly audiological medicine) is concerned with the investigation, diagnosis and management of hearing, balance and communication disorders in adults and children from birth onwards. This includes tinnitus and neurootological manifestations of other primary disease.

Working in audiovestibular medicine

This field of medicine specialises in the investigation and medical management of a wide array of audiovestibular (hearing and balance) symptoms. These can be both peripheral otological (ear) and central nervous system in origin, and include disorders which are:

- Inherited.
- Infectious.
- Inflammatory.
- Vascular.
- Traumatic.
- Metabolic.

The broad scope of illness means that a multidisciplinary approach is a key part of this specialty.

Audiovestibular medicine aims to improve wellbeing and quality of life of the patient by investigating and interpreting audiovestibular clinical findings. It also seeks to identify other pathologies which may have an impact on the patient's health or wellbeing, and institutes treatment and advice about their prevention or further progression. Furthermore, the specialty integrates clinical information and counselling with the rehabilitation approaches of other professionals.

This is a small but expanding specialty. There is increasing demand for consultant posts since the introduction of the Neonatal Hearing Screening Programme and recent recognition of a greater need for care for patients with peripheral vestibular disease.

Common procedures / interventions

Some common procedures and interventions include:

- Clinical and neurootological examination (including other family members where necessary)
- Measurement of audiovestibular function (with healthcare scientists).
- Investigations, including radiological imaging, and a variety of blood and urine pathology.
- Assessment for suitability for hearing aids and cochlear implants (with healthcare scientists and other disciplines).
- Treatment of infection, autoimmune disorders, and peripheral vestibular dysfunction. This could be through pharmaceutical products, repositioning manoeuvres and physiotherapy involving relevant professionals.

Associated sub specialties

Sub specialties linked with audiovestibular medicine are:

- Paediatrics – especially child development and neurodisability.
- Clinical genetics.
- Neurology (adult and paediatric).
- Otorhinolaryngology.

- Geriatric medicine.
- Immunology and allergy.
- Ophthalmology.

Further information

Just click the button below for more information

Workforce Statistics

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