

## PREFACE TO WEB EDITION OF 'VERTIGO AND DIZZINESS'

by Lucy Yardley

In 1994 Routledge published a book I authored entitled 'Vertigo and Dizziness' as part of their 'Experience of Illness' series. Although this series was intended principally to be read by medical sociologists and health psychologists, I received a large number of letters and comments from people living with dizziness and health professionals working with them, who had found this book useful. It is now out of print, and so with the help of the Ménière's Society and the kind permission of Routledge, I would like to continue to make it available via the InterNet. The copyright has been returned to me by Routledge; readers are very welcome to make personal use of this version of the book (including printing it out in order to read it) and may cite it, but should not reprint the text or text excerpts without first seeking permission from me.

The book is now, of course, a little out of date, and unfortunately I do not have time to produce a revised second edition. However, it remains remarkably relevant to the situation of people with vertigo and dizziness today. In fact, in the years since it was published further research has been conducted (by myself and others) which has produced evidence that supports many of the explanations for the experiences of dizziness offered in the book.

## PREFACE TO ORIGINAL EDITION OF VERTIGO AND DIZZINESS

My interest in the problems of people suffering from vertigo (dizziness or imbalance) was awakened by my experience of carrying out diagnostic testing on people with suspected balance system defects. After these patients had waited several months for these tests, and then endured two hours of fairly unpleasant and frightening procedures (during which time they usually confided in me the entire history surrounding their vertigo), they would invariably ask anxiously "What is wrong with me? What will happen to me now?" I was as unhappy as they were with the inadequacy of the cautious reply I was often obliged to give: "The tests have not shown anything seriously wrong with your balance system -- the doctor will see you again in another month or two." The purpose of this book is to provide a more satisfactory and complete answer to their questions, by analysing and explaining the factors which contribute to vertigo and recovery from vertigo.

When I first started to research the topic of dizziness and imbalance I was primarily interested in the perceptual and psychophysiological aspects of disorientation, and I therefore began by exploring individual differences in perceptual, postural and autonomic responses to disorienting conditions. At the same time, I became increasingly aware that the effects on lifestyle and well-being of which people with vertigo typically complained seemed very far removed from the perceptual-motor difficulties which were supposed to be their "real" problem, and which constituted the exclusive focus of medical interest and treatment. Interview and questionnaire studies helped me to identify psychosocial, environmental and behavioural elements of the experience of vertigo, and allowed me to begin to construct the more complex, multidimensional description of the experience developed in this book.

I would like to thank numerous friends and colleagues for their support, and in particular Alan Costall, who first inspired me to write this book and guided me through the PhD thesis on which it is based, and whose thoughtful questions and erudite comments have had a profound and enduring influence on my thinking and writing. The series editors, Stan Newman and Ray Fitzpatrick have also given me invaluable encouragement and sound

advice. I am grateful to Linda Luxon and Johanna Beyts for sharing with me their considerable clinical expertise in rehabilitation for people with vertigo. I wish to thank Michelle Lacoudraye-Harter, Alison Todd, Judith Putman, Elaine Masson, & Carl Verschuur for their help with data collection and coding, and the following people for their interest, advice and practical assistance: Anthony Gale, Roger Ingham, Denise Cafarelli-Dees, Alan Martin, Michael Gresty, and Adolfo Bronstein. Finally, I am indebted to everyone who participated in my studies, and whose graphic and candid accounts are fundamental to the understanding of vertigo which this book hopes to achieve.