

Changes in Meniere's Disease Responses as a Function of the Menstrual Cycle

Dr. Gwen Morse

<http://oto2.wustl.edu/men/mn8.htm>

Meniere's disease is a complex, progressive disorder of the inner ear evidenced by vertigo (dizziness), hearing loss, aural pressure (feeling of pressure in the ear), and tinnitus (ringing in the ear). Though generally considered equally common across genders, several recent studies describe women's increasing anecdotal reports of symptom exacerbation during the perimenstruum (from ovulation through the menstrual bleed). To date, no studies have carefully explored women's symptom reports to establish the relationship between menstrual cycle phases and Meniere's disease responses.

Dr. Gwen Morse at the University of San Diego, School of Nursing, has developed a research project in this area. This research was driven by the fact that Gwen experienced Meniere's disease for more than 20 years and has first-hand experience with many surgical and medical treatments. Over the years, Gwen carefully monitored her symptoms and noted a relationship between the intensity of her symptoms and her various menstrual cycle phases. She observed that her symptoms increased during the perimenstruum and would decrease following menstruation and the week after menstruation. After receiving her Doctorate and learning more about the menstrual cycle, she decided to examine this relationship. After an exhaustive review of the literature, Gwen found that several prominent health care practitioners have observed this relationship, however, research proving this claim is limited.

The goal of Dr. Morse's research project is to compare Meniere's disease responses between menstruant women and men (serving as a control group) and to learn if women's symptom reports are similar during various menstrual cycle phases over time. This study is currently under way and no more volunteers are required at this time.

Results from this study may provide evidence that a unique relationship exists between the menstrual cycle and Meniere's disease responses for some women. This information will provide greater understanding of Meniere's disease among reproductive-age women for researchers and health care practitioners. Until recently, clinical research has focused specifically on women with results of studies combining both genders not always applying to women. Women are physiologically different and their responses to clinical disorders such as Meniere's disease may be different.