



MdDS Foundation

Dedicated to finding the cause
and cure for MdDS

Mal de Débarquement Syndrome (MdDS)

Also called: Disembarkment Syndrome, Rocking Vertigo



Mal de Débarquement Syndrome is a neurological disorder that leaves patients feeling as if they are rocking, bobbing, or swaying. **It can be diagnosed and managed.**

Symptoms of MdDS

- ✓ Constant sense of motion **as if on a boat**, such as **rocking, bobbing** and **swaying**.
- ✓ Feeling in motion **lasts for months to years** and may be accompanied by:
 - unsteadiness
 - imbalance
 - anxiety
 - fatigue
 - sense of unstable ground
 - cognitive impairment
 - visual motion intolerance
 - headache
- ✗ It is not spinning or rotational vertigo.

Diagnosing MdDS

No tests can provide a definitive diagnosis of MdDS. Start by asking patients:

- ✓ Do you feel like you are constantly rocking and swaying and the only time it stops is when you are in motion (*e.g.*, driving or riding in a car)?
- ✓ Did you recently travel on a ship, boat, airplane or experience other passive motion?



Diagnostic criteria established by the Bárány Society and published in the *Journal of Vestibular Research* will aid you in diagnosing MdDS.¹

Mal de Débarquement Syndrome is indexed in the ICD-10-CM under Billing Code R42.

Innovative clinical studies are ongoing.
mdsfoundation.org/research

Duration

Symptoms are highly variable in intensity, may be disabling, and persist for months...



... even years.

Classic and Spontaneous Onset

airplane

boat

car/
train

spont.

other

Diagnosis is based primarily on clinical history, such as recent travel, however some patients may also develop MdDS without a motion trigger.

Treating MdDS

No treatments or therapies are universally helpful.

- ✓ Patients may find relief with medications that reduce anxiety and depression.
- ✓ Relevant areas of the brain have been identified and may be targets for neuromodulation therapy.²
- ✓ VOR and OKN treatment may offer relief for some individuals.³
- ✓ Vestibular therapy or vigorous exercise may benefit some individuals.
- ✗ Medications for motion sickness (anticholinergics) are not effective for either prevention or treatment of MdDS.

References

1 **Cha YH**, Baloh RW, Cho C, Magnusson M, Song JJ, Strupp M, Wuyts F, Staab JP. Mal de Debarquement Syndrome diagnostic criteria: consensus document of the classification committee of the Barany Society. *J Vestib Res* 30:285-293, **2020**.

2 **Cha YH**, Ding L, Yuan H. Neuroimaging markers of Mal de Debarquement Syndrome. *Front Neurol* 12:636224, **2021**.

3 **Browne CJ**, Sheeba SR, Astill T, Baily A, Deblieck C, Mucci V, Cavaleri R. Assessing the synergistic effectiveness of intermittent theta burst stimulation and the vestibular ocular reflex rehabilitation protocol in the treatment of Mal de Debarquement Syndrome: a randomised controlled trial. *J Neurol*. **2024**; 271: 2615–2630.



This information is provided as an educational service by

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