Part 14

A Ménière's Research Update

By

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Many people who suffer with Ménière's Disease ask this question — why, after so many years of knowing about the disease hasn't anyone found a cause or cure for it? The question presented on social media is often followed by comments about the medical community having little to no interest in the rare disease. Is that true?

I remember reading research and talking personally with medical specialists about the so-called '60% rule.' That where about 60% of Ménière's patients experience some improvement in their symptoms from the multiple types of treatments that have been developed during the last century or so. Two problems with that are —

1. 40% of patients do not see any improvement
2. A large number of the 60% who do see some improvement report a regress over time back to where they were before. Some patients have even reported their later symptoms were worse than before the treatment (e.g. medical procedures, surgery).

One research article I read stated —

> "In retrospect, this incomplete treatment response likely reflects the inherent heterogeneity of the MD population. Without more precise stratification of MD patients, large scale efficacy in treatments may never be reached." (Frontiers in Neurology)

I've known about Ménière's Disease for many years because it affected many members of my family. (e.g. grandmother, mother, aunts, uncles, cousins), including me. My natural inclination as a journalist and health researcher has been to 'dig into the subject' to see for myself what is being done to find better ways of giving hope to people who suffer with Ménière's. That's one of the primary reasons I started this Section on Substack. What I'd like to do next is look at some of the latest medical research into Ménière's.

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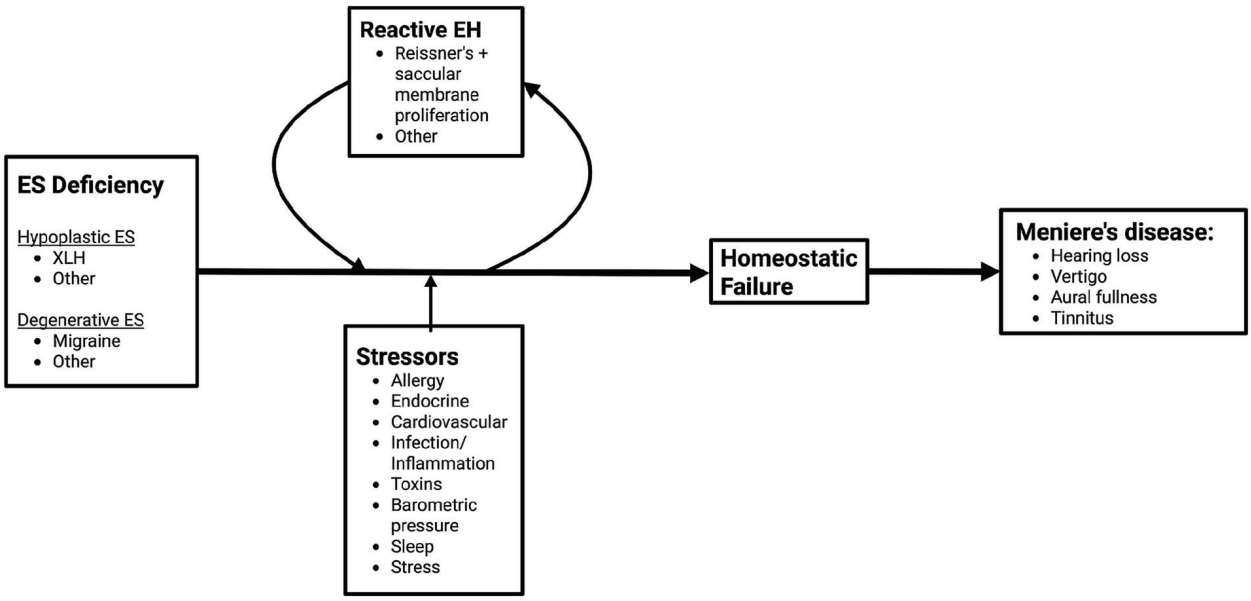
Research #1

I've already listed a lot of research background in previous articles in this Section through the years, so my goal is to find what's new from the last couple of years. I'd like to begin with an interesting article published in Frontiers in Neurology in May of 2025. The point of the article seems to be a 'reframing' of the paradigm from 'endolymphatic Hydrops to endolymphatic sac deficiency.'

"Building on these findings, we propose a novel conceptual framework to explain MD pathophysiology. This model places failure of inner ear homeostasis—particularly involving the endolymphatic sac (ES)—at the center of disease development, rather than endolymphatic hydrops."



The authors also address 'imaging biomarkers for distal endolymphatic sac Endotypes',' 'the allergy hypothesis,' 'familial' Ménière's, and 'Genetic stratification of MD patients based on shared clinical phenotypes or endotypes.' This research is looking to identify 'meaningful genetic associations.'

"As we move toward a more refined classification of MD, genetic analysis offers a promising, but still developing, tool for subtyping patients. Much like histolopathologic and radiologic approaches have helped distinguish endotypes, genetics may offer a path to uncover shared mechanisms among a clinically heterogeneous group. Identifying genetic causes of MD has proven challenging due to its complex, multifactorial nature. Multiple research strategies have emerged, ranging from analysis of familial cases to stratifying patients based on shared phenotypes and endotypes … Future research endeavors must aim to validate and integrate these evolving tools—histologic and radiologic biomarkers and genetic factors—into robust clinical frameworks. Large, multicenter studies with prospective designs will be essential to confirm the prognostic and therapeutic value of MD subtyping. Equally important will be the development of novel therapeutic agents tailored to specific MD endotypes—shifting the focus from symptom control to disease modification. In the spirit of Prosper Meniere's original contribution, our

challenge now is not simply to observe, but to classify with precision, and in doing so, transform how we understand and treat this complex disorder."

You can read the full article here.

Research #2

I'm very interested in research being done at the Kolling Institute in Sydney, Australia —

> "In a crucial step towards a better understanding of Meniere's disease, researchers at the Kolling Institute and the University of Sydney have discovered a gene mutation which could greatly inform future treatment of the disease.
>
> Meniere's can be an inherited condition with approximately 10 per cent of patients having one or more relatives affected by it, but the latest research, led by world leading investigator Professor Jose Antonio Lopez-Escamez, indicates the inherited or genetic form of the disease may be more common than first realised.
>
> His team has discovered a rare mutation of the GJD3 gene in both patients with and without a genetic history of the disease.

> It is the first time this gene has been linked to any disease." Kolling Institute

The study included 400 participants who have Ménière's Disease. About 4.4% were found to have the genetic mutation. Professor Lopez-Escamez said that gene therapy will 'be developed further to treat Meniere's disease in the years to come.' You can read more about the ongoing research in a 'Spring Nature' article from January 2025.

One question that immediately springs to mind is 'how many years' before researchers find a gene therapy that works? Professor Lopez-Escamez believes we'll see a 'game-changing approach' within the next ten years. As someone closing in on 78 years of age, that 'game' changing approach' will probably not help me. However, that's not necessarily my goal at this point in my life. I'm thinking about the tens of thousands of Ménière's patients who are younger and trying to raise families, be successful in their careers, and live more normal lives. I'm also thinking about members of my own family who might be affected because I have a familial history with Ménière's Disease.

Even though Ménière's is known as a 'rare' disease (0.2% of the American population), thousands of people are diagnosed with it every year. That makes research in Australia and other countries vital for future generations.

You may find this Ménière's Awareness Flipping Book interesting to view as well.

Research #3

One of my specialists was trained at the renowned House Institute, so I was curious to see what new ideas might be coming from that group of experts. Howard P. House, M.D., started the Los Angeles Foundation of Otology in 1946. It was renamed the House Ear Institute in the early 1980's. You can read more about its history of research and innovation here.

My interest is what research and innovation are we seeing at the House Institute recently. Here's one that is current and ongoing:

> **Repurposed Use of Allergic Rhinitis and Allergic Asthma Drug to Reduce Vertigo and Hearing Loss in Meniere's Disease (NCT04815187)**
>
> Description: Assessing the potential benefit of montelukast for individuals with allergies and Meniere's disease. Seeking patients with actively symptomatic unilateral Meniere's disease and allergies

Funding Source: Cures Within Reach/House Institute Foundation

Primary Investigator: Dr. Jennifer Derebery

Dr. Derebery is interested in allergic and immune mediated-ear disease, and especially as it applies to Meniere's disease and autoimmune inner ear disease. She has published papers on the effects of allergy immunotherapy (allergy desensitization shots) on the symptoms of Meniere's disease. She also published clinical trial results on the use of an antiviral agent in Meniere's disease, as well as an immunomodulator medication in patients with autoimmune inner ear disease. She is currently involved as a principal investigator of an experimental medication to treat tinnitus.

I've followed Dr. Derebery's research for many years because of how allergies may play a role in my familial Ménière's. Every member of my family who was diagnosed with Ménière's has or had (several have passed away) severe problems with allergies. The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology quotes her in its July 2024 Vertigo and Allergen Immunotherapy report.

The House Institute Foundation also has recent reports about Managing Your Tinnitus, its Hearing Science Accelerator, and New and Orphan Drugs. The study title is — Repurposed Use of Allergic Rhinitis and Allergic Asthma Drug to Reduce Vertigo and Hearing Loss in Meniere's disease.

> Clinical trials conducted at the Center will identify and investigate new drug interventions to help with symptom management and disease progression. Prospective studies like these are a crucial pillar of the Center and can help drive future research. Our current prospective study looks at the repurposed use of allergic rhinitis and allergic asthma drugs to reduce vertigo and hearing loss in patients with Ménière's.

> Funded by Cures Within Reach, this double-blind placebo-controlled randomized clinical trial is aimed at proof of concept that Montelukast, a previously FDA-approved medication that is known to help with allergy symptoms, may help to alleviate symptoms in patients with Ménière's. The House Institute Foundation

You may find some of Dr. Derebery's past videos helpful in the area of Meniere's research, as well as other videos from The House Institute.

Other Research

Hyperplastic growth, not hydrostatic distension, in endolymphatic hydrops in humans challenges the classic view of Meniere's disease - November 19, 2025

Phase 3 Data Offer Hope to Patients With Meniere Disease - February 27, 2025

Shorter disease duration seen with eustachian tube dysfunction in Meniere disease - December 15, 2025

Innovative imaging tool could improve diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss - July 23, 2025

The Ménière's Disease Symposium - February 21, 2025

2026 Singapore Meniere's Disease Drugs Market Forecast & Ecosystem Analysis - December 19, 2025

Recent advances in diagnostic and therapeutic strategies for management of dizzy patients in Japan - March 14, 2025

Latest Meniere's Research Findings - November 6. 2025

OCT Imaging Reveals New Insights into Meniere's Disease and Other Inner Ear Disorders - Aug 21, 2025

Are There New Treatments For Meniere's Disease? - Aug 2, 2025

Immunological mechanisms in Meniere's disease - August 26, 2025

New imaging method links inner ear fluid levels to severity of hearing loss - July 23, 2025

The groundbreaking Meniere's research of Andreas Eckhard and David Bächinger- Neil Canham, Spinning Down, March 12, 2026

I'll continue to update you about new Meniere's research as it becomes available.

Next Time

In the next Ménière's Years newsletter I’d like to share some thoughts about people who are dealing with symptoms they fear may be Meniere’s Disease. How does the diagnosis process work? What should you expect when you visit your doctor? What do you do if you get a diagnosis of Meniere’s Disease?