

Introduction



This special issue of the Journal includes ten scientific papers from the Eighth symposium on the Role of the Vestibular Organs in Space Exploration. This international meeting of researchers and managers, flight surgeons and astronauts was held in Houston Texas on April 8–10, 2011, immediately before the 18th Humans in Space Symposium of the International Academy of Astronautics. Fifty seven specialists participated in the single track, two and a half day symposium, which included 40 fifteen minute platform presentations, a poster session, and a panel discussion with flight surgeons and five astronauts. Abstracts were published in an earlier issue (Journal of Vestibular Research 21(2), 2011; <http://www.jvr-web.org/Issues.html>). Abstracts from the 7th Symposium (Noordwijk, Netherlands, 2006) and 6th Symposium (Portland, USA, 2002) and full proceedings from the first five NASA sponsored symposia are also downloadable there at no cost.

The present issue includes ten papers, presented in the same sequence as at the symposium. The associated session theme is indicated in a footnote to each. Four of them (Cohen, Mulavara, Peters, Shelhamer) evaluating techniques for sensorimotor assessment and adaptation of normals, patients and astronauts. Three more examine height related anxiety effects on posture control (Young), how body posture and viewpoint oscillation influence linearvection (Guterman), and how the turtle utricular otolithic membrane mechanically responds to vibrations (Dunlap). There are two papers (Holly, Selva) modeling orientation perception and sensory conflict and finally, a paper evaluating the “poison theory” and

other adaptationist explanations for motion sickness (Oman). Several other papers from the symposium – including results of several spaceflight experiments – will appear in a subsequent issue.

The 8th symposium was organized by Drs. Charles Oman, Owen Black, Laurence Young, and William Paloski. Dr. Black chaired the Program Committee, which included Drs. Boyle, Clark, Cullen, Kozlovskaya, Mukai, Shelhamer, Wood, Wuyts, and Young. The Symposium was hosted by Dennis Grounds and John Charles of NASA’s Human Research Program, who furnished USRA meeting coordination and web site services. USRA’s Kecia Mallette, Linda Tanner, Katy Buckaloo, and Gail Pacetti did a superb job throughout. The Sensorimotor Research Team of the National Space Biomedical Research Institute sponsored production of the JVR program issue, meeting AV services, and student travel. Special thanks to Bill Mitchell, Brie Henwood and Mike Newman of the National AeroSpace Training and Research Center (NAS-TAR) who hosted the poster session reception. Also *thank you* to our discipline’s resident humorist, Dr. Ben Lawson, for his delightful talk at the Symposium dinner, humorously roasting past symposium contributors, and in a more serious vein, reminding all of us why we are inspired to do space exploration research. A transcript of Dr. Lawson’s talk is online at <http://www.jvr-web.org/Links.html>.

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8th Symposium Organizing Committee Chair