

## QUESTION

A 68-year-old man with a long history of hypertension and hypercholesterolemia is brought to the emergency department by ambulance after a fall at home. He reports feeling dizzy and lightheaded for several days before the fall. He denies any chest pain, shortness of breath, or changes in vision. He has no recent falls or injuries. He is on lisinopril and atorvastatin. His vital signs are stable. Physical examination is unremarkable. A CT scan of the head is negative for acute intracranial pathology.

Which of the following is the most likely cause of his symptoms and fall?

A. Acute myocardial infarction  
B. Cerebellar stroke  
C. Orthostatic hypotension  
D. Vestibular neuritis  
E. Medication side effect

## ANSWER

**C. Orthostatic hypotension**

This patient's symptoms and fall are most consistent with orthostatic hypotension. The key features include a long history of hypertension, dizziness and lightheadedness for several days before the fall, and a negative CT scan of the head. Orthostatic hypotension is a common condition in older adults, often caused by medications such as antihypertensives (like lisinopril) and statins (like atorvastatin). It is characterized by a significant drop in blood pressure upon standing, leading to symptoms like dizziness and lightheadedness, which can result in falls. The patient's stable vital signs and unremarkable physical examination further support this diagnosis.

## DISCUSSION

Orthostatic hypotension is a common condition in older adults, often caused by medications such as antihypertensives (like lisinopril) and statins (like atorvastatin). It is characterized by a significant drop in blood pressure upon standing, leading to symptoms like dizziness and lightheadedness, which can result in falls. The patient's stable vital signs and unremarkable physical examination further support this diagnosis.

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