Many neurologists have come across patients with visual snow, and have little to nothing to offer them because so little is known about the condition.

Visual snow (VS) is the persisting visual symptom of seeing snow or television-like static across their visual field. The snow and static tends to be worse in the dark, but can be seen in all lighting conditions.

VS should not be confused with normal entopic phenomena or vitreous floaters. While these two conditions also cause you to see spots and floating objects, this is not the same as VS.

There is no known cause for visual snow. Through documented case studies illegal and legal drug usage can sometimes lead to VS, but little is known on the specific causes. A few connections between HPPD, auto-immune disease, and lyme disease have been found. However, far more cases of visual snow have no connection at all to another condition.

Although the vision is affected, very few people have had irregular eye test results. Most come back within normal range, leading doctors to believe that patients may be making their symptoms up. CT scans and MRIs also tend to come back normal, again stumping doctors. It is more likely to be an undetectable chemical imbalance in the brain.
The term visual snow is rather limiting for the condition as there are numerous symptoms that patients experience above and beyond visual snow. Many people also see after images, vitreous floaters, entopic phenomenon, glare, halos, starbursts, trails, palinopsia, double vision, odd colors and shapes. Many sufferers also have non-visual symptoms such as fatigue, tinnitus or depersonalization and derealisation.

There currently is no established treatment for visual snow. Many patients have tried migraine medication with little to no success. Other have tried herbs, cleansing, acupuncture, and chiropractors, again with little to no success.

It is important for you to realize that this is a 24/7 condition for these sufferers. The symptoms do not ever go away. Even with their eyes closed they see the static, afterimages and other disturbing visual images.

The Headache Group of Dr. Peter Goadsby from the University of California, San Francisco presented their preliminary results of an interview study with patients with visual snow at the American Academy of Neurology 64th Annual Meeting in New Orleans. The platform presentation with the title Visual Snow: a New Disease Entity Distinct from Migraine Aura was held at the headache session of this meeting and received great attention from the auditorium consisting of Neurologists, Neuro-ophthalmologists and Ophthalmologists. It was presented as a Highlight in the Field of both, the headache and neuro-ophthalmology sections.
In June, the project “Clinical Characterization of Visual Snow” (Positive Persistent Visual Disturbance) was presented by Dr. Christoph Schankin from Dr. Goadsby’s group at the 54th Annual Scientific Meeting of the American Headache Society. It was chosen for the “Frontiers in Headache Research Scholarship” award by the scientific committee of the American Headache Society. The audience showed great interest in the topic and the results of this study. Many attendees of the presentation communicated having seen patients with “visual snow” and appreciated research being done to improve knowledge and treatment of this disabling medical condition.

Currently, Dr. Goadsby and Dr. Schankin are investigating the biological mechanism behind “visual snow” by doing brain-imaging studies (routine MRI and PET). They are looking for study participants who would be willing to travel to San Francisco.

Dr. Goadsby and Dr. Schankin from UCSF are 100% committed to visual snow research, and are very motivated to help find the cause and hopefully a treatment plan. If you can please pass this information along to your patients suffering from visual snow, it would be greatly appreciated.

To participate in this Visual Snow study patients must:
1) Suffer from 24/7 visual snow

2) live in the U.S.

3) Be willing to travel to San Francisco for testing

4) complete a short, very simple phone interview to determine if you are eligible

5) Must be between the ages of 18 - 55

Contact details for the study and updates can be found on http://www.eyeonvision.org or contact the doctors directly at

VS-Research@Neurology.ucsf.edu