

CURRENT PARKINSON'S RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

The department of clinical neuroscience, University College London, based at the Royal Free Hospital carry out a large amount of research into all aspects of Parkinson's and related conditions. Collaborating with other UK and international research teams, many of these studies are sponsored and funded by Parkinson's UK, the Medical Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council.

This means that our patients can be offered the opportunity to be involved in new research or try potential new therapies.

We have various ongoing studies taking place at the moment, which you can read about here with information on how to hear more from the research teams if you are interested in taking part.

Care of Late Stage Parkinsonism



What is the study about?

Professor Anette Schrag is leading a European wide study looking at the current provision of care for people who have had Parkinson's for a number of years. The aim of the study is to evaluate and assess people's needs and to compare the effectiveness of different health and social care systems with a view to improving medical treatment and quality of life for both people with Parkinson's and their carers.

Who could take part?

The research team would like to talk to people who have had Parkinson's for longer than seven years. They are also interested in hearing from carers.

How can I find out more?

Contact:

Joy Read, study coordinator joy.read@ucl.ac.uk tel: 020 7794 0550 ext 31218
Gergely Bartl, research assistant g.bartl@ucl.ac.uk tel: 020 7794 0550 ext 31218

Vision in Parkinson's



What is the study about?

As well as movement problems, some patients with Parkinson's also suffer from changes in their vision. These can cause hallucinations, and can affect everyday tasks such as reading the newspaper. Dr Rimona Weil is coordinating a study looking at how vision changes in some people with Parkinson's disease. The aim of the study is to work out why vision is affected in some and not in others. We want to understand these symptoms better so that we can develop new treatments.

Who could take part?

We are interested in hearing from people with Parkinson's and especially those without a tremor.

How can I find out more?

Contact:

Dr. Rimona Weil r.weil@ucl.ac.uk tel: 020 3108 7464

Several studies are using genetics to understand Parkinson's more

It's very rare for Parkinson's to be inherited – the condition is passed from one generation to the next in less than 5% of cases. But identifying genes that cause Parkinson's directly in some people will help us to understand more about the causes of all forms of the condition. We already know about some of the genes, but there are likely to be more.

Professor Huw Morris is leading several studies trying to find new genetic variants that cause Parkinson's with a view to developing better genetic tests and ultimately new improved treatments in the future.

Parkinson's Families Project



What is the study about?

For most people who develop Parkinson's there is no clear underlying cause. However, Professor Morris and his team are particularly interested in the minority of people diagnosed with Parkinson's who have either early onset disease and/or relatives affected with Parkinson's. We think that variations in inherited material (genes) can sometimes cause the disease, and this may run in families. This opens the door to a range of studies on the effects of gene variation at a nerve cell and brain level, which we hope will lead to new targeted treatments.

Who could take part?

The research team is interested in making contact with people with Parkinson's particularly if they have a family history of Parkinson's and/or if their Parkinson's began before the age of 45.

How can I find out more?

Contact:

Prof Huw Morris or Manuela Tan, study coordinator ion.pdresearch@ucl.ac.uk

The LRRK2 study



RARE DISEASES
TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH
COLLABORATION

What is the study about?

It's rare for Parkinson's to be inherited – the condition is directly caused by genetic changes in less than 5% of cases, but of these cases changes in a gene called LRRK2 are the commonest cause. LRRK2 has a familial pattern of inheritance and variations in this gene are more common in certain populations including the Ashkenazi Jewish community and people of north African descent. The researchers are looking at how certain changes in proteins related to this gene can be picked up earlier with a view to being able to predict the condition and developing new drugs that could be useful in the treatment of Parkinson's.

Who could take part?

People with a family history of Parkinson's and who are in the higher risk populations such as the Ashkenazi Jewish or north African population.

How can I find out more?

Contact:

Dr. Mie Rizig m.rizig@ucl.ac.uk or mie.rizig@nhs.net tel: 07469 145 937

Communicating genetic research in complex neurological conditions

What is the study about?

Research exploring new genes is often lengthy and researchers cannot offer immediate answers and results. People taking part are often introduced to uncertainty and issues around inheritance even though risks are very low. How uncertainty is communicated and the process of research is explained is a vital consideration for healthcare professionals and scientists working in genetic research. This is an interview based study exploring how people with Parkinson's prefer information around genetic research to be delivered.

Who could take part?

People who have taken part in a genetic research study.

How can I find out more?

Contact:

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