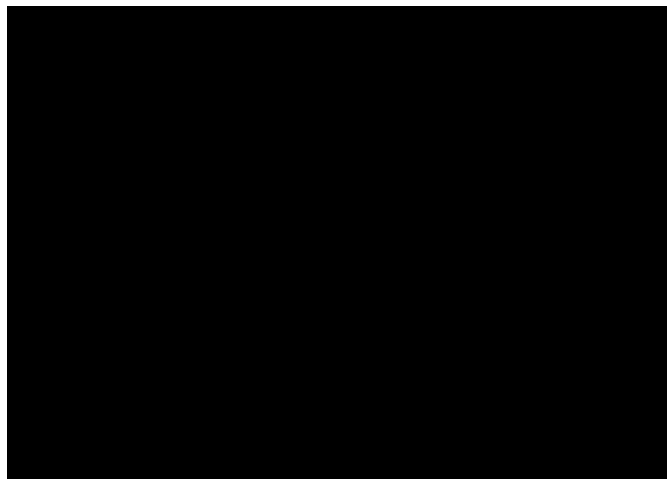


Branch news

Having fun with colour

Report by Patricia Davies

A new and exciting art group for people with Parkinson's, their partners, carers, family and friends, has started at Mannings Heath Village Hall. It meets on the second Friday of the month, all materials are provided and its absolutely free! It is made possible by the generous legacy left to the branch by Jean and Ron Kent. Jean herself was a wonderful artist.



The group is facilitated by Aimee Bleach. Aimee is an enthusiastic, bubbly, and warm person who runs the sessions in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. Aimee has an Illustration degree and a BA Hons degree in fashion illustration.

When Aimee's father was diagnosed with Parkinson's she set about learning as much as she could about the condition so she could help her father as well as support her mother. Her investigations led her to Nancy Tingey who developed the Painting with Parkinson's programme after her husband was diagnosed with the condition.

Painting can bring relief to Parkinson's symptoms by helping to reconnect the mind and body. A frozen moment can become a turning point using wet paint on wet paper. A tremoring hand can sometimes be stilled. Intense explosive colours that appear beneath a brush as frustration can become the beginnings of something special.

She also discovered that music can short circuit the art process and, combined with painting, can release stiff muscles and find flow.

No experience is needed to attend this group and no artist talent! If you are doubtful that you can create anything but a splodge on a piece of paper, you will be amazed what you can actually do.

Before we start to paint we do a few warm up exercises and Aimee gives us a brief chat on a particular artist or how art is used culturally. The group never knows what shape the sessions are going to take. They deliberately have a loose structure so everyone can express themselves freely.

During the October session we were given giant bamboo sticks which had different coloured

Dates at a glance

1st November: tango, MHVH, 7pm

3rd November: branch meeting, 11:30am, MHVH, Peter Corbett shares his experiences on living well with Parkinson's

9th November: working age group meeting, Lintot pub, 7pm, open to all

10th November: art workshop, MHVH, 11:30am

11th November: Henfield charities fair, 10am – 2pm Henfield Hall, Coopers Way, Henfield

18th November: Race Night, 7pm for 7:30pm, MHVH

1st December: branch meeting, 11:30am, Christmas social, with drinks, nibbles and quiz

6th December: tango, MHVH, 7pm

8th December: art workshop, MHVH, 11:30am

14th December: working age group meeting, Lintot pub, 7pm, open to all

5th January: branch AGM, 5pm MHVH, **please note later time.**

11th January: working age group meeting, Lintot pub, 7pm, open to all

12th January: art workshop, MHVH, 11:30am

For further details and information on weekly activities see pages 3 and 4

MHVH – Mannings Heath Village Hall

waxed crayons attached at the ends. A very long piece of paper was stuck to the floor and you just let the music take you wherever your artistic bent led you. The results were astounding! It was magical and one of the most relaxing things I've done. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and it was a very interactive exercise. I believe Aimee is keeping this masterpiece!

We then dabbled with watercolours while a cellist played. Unlike a standard art class, these painting sessions are intended for anyone who wishes to dabble with colours and just enjoy being free to move at their own pace.

If you want some direction, Aimee is more than happy to guide you. Her enthusiasm and encouragement of your abilities are boundless and she is happy to answer any questions or give guidance. It is not a competitive atmosphere, it truly is a fun-filled time. I have come to understand is that no matter how you feel at the start of the session you will leave Mannings Heath in a very much better mood.

Even Julian who really believes he has no inner talent painted a colourful abstract which was used to print one of Aimee's flyers for the group!

Hope to see you at the next session!

These wonderful sessions are made possible by Ron and Jean Kent's legacy, so make the most of them, come and have fun! For further details please contact Aimee on 0781 5969267.

The next art session will be on Friday 10th November, 11:30, Mannings Heath Village Hall. The live music will be provided by a harpist, so that will be something special!

Singing with Maz

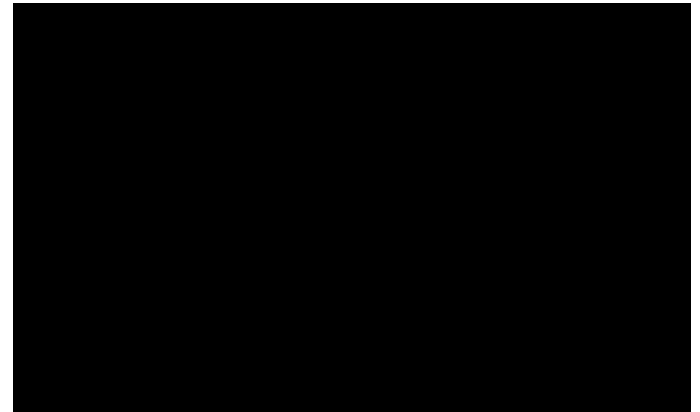
Report by Jacqui Allen

We assembled at Mannings Heath Village Hall for the October branch meeting expectantly awaiting to see what our friend Madeleine Castrey had in store for us. Starting with a few breathing and voice warm up exercises, she led us singing the well-known favourites:

- When The Saints Come Marching In
- I Can Sing, Sing, Sing and
- She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain.

After splitting us into 3 groups she had us sing it in a round ie all 3 songs at the same time in our different groups. This sounds as if it would create a cacophony of noise, but it actually creates quite a pleasant sound, when done properly.

What we created I shall leave to the imagination of the reader! All joking aside it was not too bad and we exercised both our lungs and our brains!



We also sang, in a round, the wartime classics:

- It's A Long Way To Tipperary and
- Pack Up your Troubles.

We finished our contribution to the afternoon with a rendition of Doris Day's classic Que Sera Sera followed by The Lambeth Walk.

Madeleine then showed us how it should be done, singing an aria by Bach. Our thanks to Maz for an interesting and entertaining time. Needless to say I hope we can repeat it in the not too distant future.

WHY DANCE?

Report by Paul Dodd

Dancing has been shown to release endorphins which make you feel good, relieve stress, improve memory and help with mental and physical agility. A few very good reasons to take part in dance based branch activities including weekly chair dancing, dance to live well (ballet based exercises) and monthly Argentine Tango.

The Argentine tango has the additional benefits of the music which help movement and balance, a particular bonus if you have Parkinson's. It is also great fun! **The next tango session will be on Wednesday 1st November, 7pm, Mannings Heath Village Hall.**

People News

Update on the chairperson role

Report by Tom Dellmann

I have been in post as chair for just under a year at this point. It has been an incredibly enjoyable journey so far! The group has made progress on a number of things this year such as the setting up of a new working age group. New activities including boxing, yoga and an art class are now

building up steam. Activities such as Qi Gong, Pilates and Physio continue to offer huge benefits to our members. We have done a lot of very enjoyable fundraising this year too putting us in a good position. I would like to thank the committee and all of our members for their hard work that makes all of this possible.

Giving the chairperson role the time it deserves has been very challenging for me. Half way through the year I moved jobs and my daytime availability changed - I have missed seeing you all at recent branch meetings.

Along with looking after my two kids (ages 2 and 5) and helping out my Dad who has Parkinson's through the week I'm not left with time to do the chairperson role well.

The branch deserves and needs a chair who is more available during the week and has more free time. We are now starting the search for a new chair. Don't worry - you can't get rid of me that easily! I will be staying around as long as needed; to continue in the role of chairperson until a replacement is found. Once we find a new chair I will continue to be a part of the group albeit no longer as the chair.

I would like to encourage anyone with an interest in the chair role to get in touch with someone on the committee. We will also be advertising the role externally through various channels.

Ethel Gadson

It is with great sadness that announce the death of Ethel Gadson. Ethel fought long and hard with Parkinson's. Our thoughts are with her husband Bill, who lovingly cared for her at home.

What's on

Monthly Activities

Branch Meetings

3rd November: 11:30 at Mannings Heath Village Hall with Peter Corbett giving a personal view on living well with Parkinson's

1st December: 11:30 at Mannings Heath Village Hall. Christmas social with drinks, nibbles, quiz

5th January: 5pm at Mannings Heath Village Hall, branch AGM. Please note the changed time of this meeting

Working Age Group

Informal gathering of people with Parkinson's and their partners, second Thursday of the month, from 7pm, at the Lintot pub in Southwater. This gathering is open people of all ages.

For further details please contact Emma Brinton emma.brinton@sky.com or tel 07970 898 740.

Argentine Tango

First Wednesday of the month, 7pm to 9pm, Mannings Heath Village Hall. All levels of dancers welcome, from complete beginners to experienced exponents. No booking required. No charge. Refreshments served midway through session.

The session will start with tips on how to cope with poor balance and freezing in everyday life. You'd be very welcome for these tips and refreshments only if you're not too keen on dancing!!

For further details please contact Paul Dodd 01403 266 173, e-mail: doddcp@yahoo.co.uk

Please note there will be no tango on Wednesday 3rd January.

Art Workshop

Second Friday of every month, 11:30am to 12:45pm, Mannings Heath Village Hall. All welcome, no booking or artistic talent required. All materials provided. No charge. For further information contact Aimee Bleach tel 0781 5969267 e-mail aimeebleach@outlook.com

Weekly Activities

Monday, Mannings Heath Village Hall, 2pm, Pilates followed by tea, coffee and a chat

Please note this class has very limited capacity to accept anyone new. If you would like to attend, and have prior experience of Pilates, please contact Sue West (tel 01403 273 064) or Barbara Scarborough (tel 01403 891 218) and they will advise you if a place becomes available. Cost £4 per session.

Pilates is essentially a floor-based exercise class. Participants must be able to get to the floor and back up unaided.

Please note: there will be no Pilates on Monday 25th December or Monday 1st January.

Tuesday, Mannings Heath Village Hall, 11:30am, Chair Dancing followed by tea, coffee and a chat

Cost £4 per session. No prior experience or booking necessary, just turn up! Chair dancing is open to all. It is excellent for people with Parkinson's (PWP) and anyone vertically challenged!

Please note: there will be no chair dancing on Tuesday 26th December

Tuesday, Horsham Boxing Club, Horsham Park, 5:15pm Boxercise

Release some of that pent up frustration Parkinson's leaves you with!

Numbers at boxercise are strictly limited. To check on availability or express interest in attending please contact Emma Brinton emma.brinton@sky.com or tel 07970 898 740. There is no charge for boxercise.

Please note: there will be no boxercise on Tuesday 26th December

Wednesday, Mannings Heath Village Hall, 10:30am – 12 midday, Table Tennis

All abilities welcome. Cost £5 per session. Please note this is open to all and is not exclusive to people with Parkinson's.

Please note: there will be no table tennis on Wednesday 27th December

Wednesday, Mannings Heath Village Hall, 3:30pm Dance to Live Well followed by tea, coffee and a chat

45 minutes ballet-based exercise followed by refreshments. Suitable for all, people with Parkinson's and anyone with balance problems. Cost £5 per session, No prior booking or experience necessary.

Please note: there will be no dance to live well on Wednesday 27th December

Wednesday 5pm and Thursday 5:30pm physio led exercise classes at Horsham Hospital

Please note: booking is essential. Both sessions are currently full with a waiting list. Please contact Cath Stead for details on 01403 731 072 or 07789 778 094.

Please note: there will be no physio led exercise classes at the gym on Wednesday 27th December or Thursday 28th December.

Thursday, Laurie Apted Building, Church Lane, Southwater, 5:30pm, Yoga

Everyone welcome. Cost: £4 per session to be paid in advance in blocks of 6 weeks, by bank transfer.

The number of participants is restricted by the size of the venue. To check on availability or express interest in attending please contact Emma Brinton emma.brinton@sky.com. or tel 07970 898 740.

Please note: there will be no yoga on Thursday 28th December.

Friday, Mannings Heath Village Hall, 10:30am, Qi Gong

Everyone welcome. Cost £3 per session. No prior experience or booking necessary, just turn up! May be enjoyed seated or standing.

Please note: there will be no Qi Gong on Friday 29th December,

For your ease of reference a one page summary of Horsham branch fitness activities is included at the end of this newsletter.

Fund Raising

Christmas Cards

The branch has a range of Christmas cards for sale. They will be available at Mannings Heath Village Hall from 13th November (when the hall is hired for branch activities). Price £3 for 10 cards.

Santa Time

We have once again been invited to fund raise at Santa's Grotto at Upcountry Garden Center Scaynes Hill (only 1 1/2 miles past Princess Royal Hospital Haywards Heath).

Thank you to all who have volunteered to date. We have Santas and elves for most dates but are still looking for a Santa for the afternoon of 17th December.

We also need people to shake a bucket on Saturday 25th November, Saturday 9th December, Sunday 10th December and Sunday 17th December,

The morning shift is 10am to 1pm and afternoon shift 2pm to 4.30pm on Saturdays and 2pm to 3.30pm on Sundays.

The collection point is inside, in the warm and dry, and a seat is available.

Please let Paul know if you can help tel 01403 266173, 07818 709 359. or e-mail doddcp@yahoo.co.uk

Race Night



Parish Millennium Group
CHARITY RACE NIGHT

In aid of the Horsham branch of **PARKINSON'S UK**
CHANGE ATTITUDES.
FIND A CURE.
JOIN US.

And they're off at...
Mannings Heath Village Hall
Saturday November 18th 7:00 for 7:30pm

- A lively evening full of fun and excitement
 - 'Live' races on the big screen
 - 'Human participation' races
- £1 minimum stake - payout on the winner of all races
 - Opportunities to own your own horses
 - Pay bar with beer, wine and soft drinks
 - Fish & Chip supper included in the ticket price
 - Tickets £15 each available by emailing

John at... johnhwills@btinternet.com
or Paul at... doddcp@yahoo.co.uk

This is one of our most popular events so please contact John or Paul soon to avoid disappointment

The Race night is run by the Millenium committee of Mannings Heath for the Horsham branch of Parkinson's UK. It's always a fun evening. Tickets are £15 inclusive of a fish and chip supper. Tickets available from Paul Dodd 01403 266 173, 07818 709 359 or email doddcp@yahoo.co.uk.

If you haven't already got a ticket, I suggest you get one as soon as possible.

Henfield Charities Christmas Fair

Saturday 11th November

10:00 to 14:00

Henfield Hall, Coopers Way,
Henfield BN5 9EA

Many national and local charities are taking part, including the [Horsham branch of Parkinson's UK](#). They will be offering a wide variety of Christmas-related goods, as well as stalls selling home-made cakes and savouries. There will be the usual raffle and tombolas and much more.

Entrance fee is 50p (under 16's free) and refreshments will be available throughout the fair. All proceeds from the event go to charity, so don't miss this opportunity to support your favourite charities, do your Christmas shopping, and enjoy all the fun of the fair

Latest medication supply issues

Pharmaceutical companies have advised Parkinson's UK that they're facing supply problems with the following Parkinson's medications:

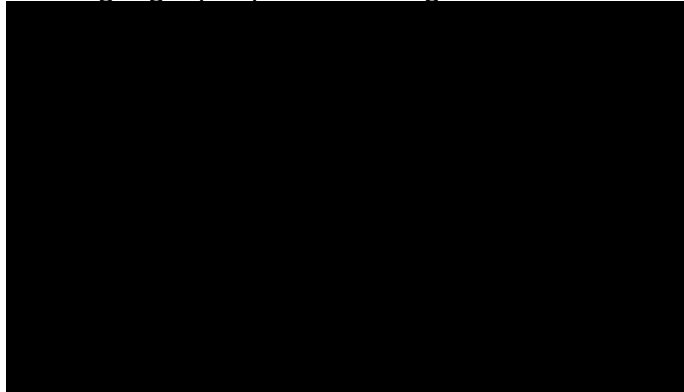
Teva

- Co-careldopa 25/100mg 100 capsules will face supply problems until mid-October.
- Pramipexole 2.10mg prolonged release tablets will face supply problems until late November 2023.
- Rasagiline 1mg will face supply problems until February 2024.
- Ropinirole 0.25mg, 0.5mg and 2.0mg tablets will face supply problems until late 2024.

Campaign News

Prescription Charges

Parkinson's UK chairs of the Prescription Charges Coalition, an alliance of over 50 organisations concerned about the detrimental impact that prescription charges are having on working age people with long-term conditions.



Parkinson's UK are calling for:

- the government to freeze the charge for 2024
- an independent review of the prescription charge exemption list urgently
- information to be given routinely to people with long-term conditions about prescription charge exemptions, the prepayment certificate and the NHS Low Income Scheme
- prescribers to stop reducing the duration of prescriptions as this prices people out of affording their vital medicines.

Keeping the grey cells fit

Report by Sue West

I really shouldn't let sister Barbara anywhere near consultants, physios etc. She remembers all that is said and repeats it back to me at regular intervals. The latest gem being: "keep learning something new to keep the brain active".

Perhaps Standup Paddleboarding was not an ideal choice for someone with Parkinson's but I enjoy a challenge. Following an initial attempt at

Southwater Country Park we decided professional help was needed and signed up for a 2.5 hour course.

One Saturday morning in October, Barbara, nephew Andrew, and I headed for Godalming Wharf where we donned our wet-suits (anticipating that we would get wet!), climbed into buoyancy aids, stowed my Parkinson's meds into a dry bag, and set off on the River Wey.

Within 10 minutes the instructor has us all, yes me included, standing up and paddling down towards the first lock.

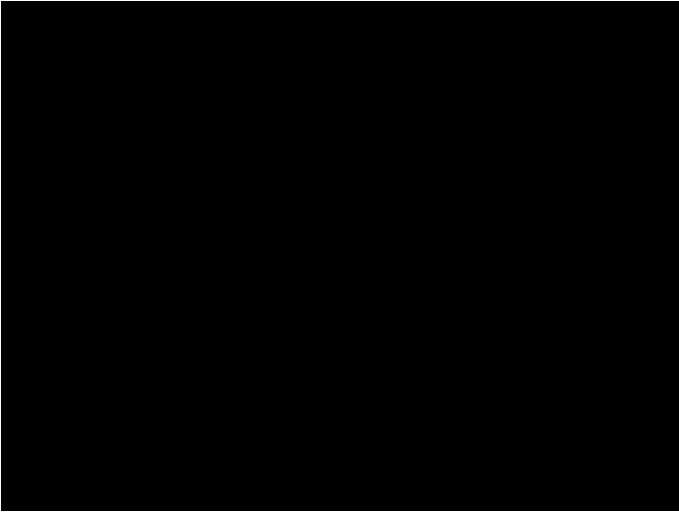


At this point we decided to make our first turn, so down we went onto our knees, steered around, stood again and returned upstream.

The whole experience was a challenge especially trying to remember to look up, and stop our toes from curling as they desperately wanted to 'hang on' to the board. We were given mindful exercises and thoughts to help us turn the wrong things off whilst helping to use the correct muscles. I am sure that my Qi Gong and Pilates helped me enormously.

The sun shone on us that day. We paddled past several young scouts having a wonderful time in their kayaks, lots of colourful narrow boats, cows drinking down at the water's edge, and kiddies feeding the ducks. Once past the limit of the navigable part of the river we had to negotiate several twists and turns, carefully steering around fallen trees and kneeling down as we went under a low bridge – all whilst staying dry!! It was fabulous.

Barbara gave me a big hug as we changed afterwards. I returned it with a grin followed by "I am wrecked!!!" But we did it. I found muscles that were hitherto asleep and I am sure that my brain did plenty of rewiring!



and a more optimistic outlook. You can't feel anxious or depressed whilst laughing.

Laughing at 'things that upset you, but that you can't control', releases unpleasant feelings from the body.

Laughter makes people feel good, even if they are unable to show it. Some people with Parkinson's develop what is called Parkinson's mask, which is the loss of facial expressions. Yet when we laugh, our face muscles tend to relax. Therefore, laughter can help to relieve Parkinson's mask, since it is impossible to laugh and have no facial expression!

Have a laugh!

Report by Sue West

I was reading the Link (Nuthurst Parish) magazine the other day about the benefits of laughter. This got me thinking about Parkinson's and laughter so I decide to do a bit of research. It seems that laughter is really good for you.

Research has shown that comedy helps people with Parkinson's to focus better, improves communication, and just makes people feel better overall.

Laughter stimulates all parts of the brain.

This includes the parts of the brain that produce dopamine. Laughter enables dopamine to be released into the system and this is helpful for alleviating some of the physical and emotional symptoms of Parkinson's.

Laughter reduces stress and anxiety levels.

When people feel stressed or anxious the sympathetic nervous system, which is the body's stress response, becomes activated and the body goes into 'fight or flight' mode. The brain becomes highly alert, cortisol (a stress hormone) is pumped through the system, the heart rate and breathing rate increase, and people may sweat. Laughter (and deep breathing) both activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the body's relaxation response.

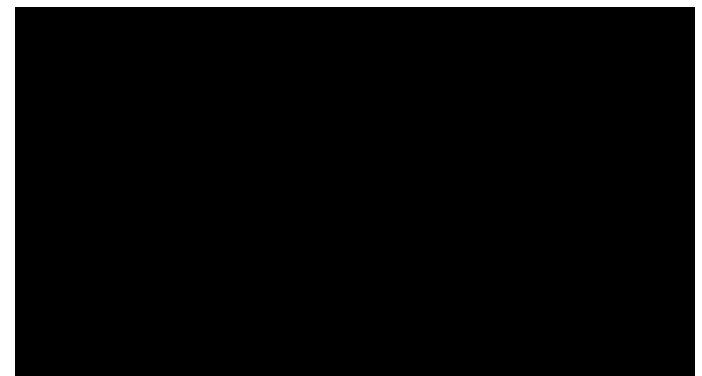
Laughter provides pain relief. Laughing releases endorphins and enkephalins, the body's natural pain killers and pumps these through the body. Laughter also improves tolerance for pain, as it takes people's mind off the pain they are experiencing.

Laughter releases a cocktail of happy hormones, including dopamine, endorphins and serotonin. The biochemical changes that occur during laughter creates a more positive state of mind

Research Roundup

Report by Mike Onley

At the September branch meeting we were delighted to host Dr Becky Jones, and her colleague Emma from the Parkinson's UK research department. They gave us a fascinating presentation, which covered the variety of subjects, including the Parkinson's brain bank and various research projects which are currently taking place. We had a great turnout of nearly 100 people, so thank you all for coming out on the day.



As you know our branch tries to fund between four and six projects each year. We asked Becky and Emma for their recommendations for our next allocation of £2000 to each of two chosen projects.

They recommended one quality of life project and one scientific research project. We were more than happy with their recommendations so will be sending £2000 to project H2203, which investigates how exercise and brain activity training can be used to improve balance and £2000 to project G2204, which is investigating how the protein Alpha-synuclein, which is a key factor in Parkinson's is transferred from the gut to the brain, where it damages the dopamine producing cells.

Research bulletin

The latest research bulletin, which I will get sent around, has an interesting section on the World Parkinsons conference which took place in Barcelona in July.

At the moment, there are 162 Parkinson's clinical trials taking place worldwide. These are testing both new and repurposed drugs for Parkinson's, towards the ultimate aim of finding new ways to slow or even stop the progression of Parkinson's.

Some 17,000 people are needed, with different symptoms, genetics and experiences, to come forward and take part.

The emerging therapies session covered a number of avenues being investigated towards new treatments for Parkinson's.

The first area discussed was the potential to repurpose existing drugs.

As we know, finding new drug treatments can take a long time. The process between discovering a potential new drug and getting it approved for use is lengthy and involves many steps. While frustrating, these steps are necessary to ensure that any new treatments are safe and effective for the people taking them.

But there are some ways that this process can be speeded up. One of these is looking at repurposing existing drugs. This means taking a drug that is already used by people to treat one condition or symptom, and seeing if it can be used to treat something else.

Repurposing a drug can help speed up the research process as it's already known to be safe for people to use. Which means that some of the lengthy testing and approval processes can be cut down, as long as the drug is proven to be effective.

Of the 162 ongoing clinical studies, 52 are looking at repurposed drugs. One example of this is ambroxol — a component of a cough medicine. Research has shown that ambroxol might be able to boost levels of an enzyme called GCa6. In brain cells, GCa6 helps clear away waste products and prevent them building up. Often in people with Parkinson's, the brain cells can't clear away waste properly, and this can lead to damage and death of the cells. It's thought that ambroxol may help improve the body's ability to clear away these clumps of waste and prevent cell death.

Drugs and genetics

Around 10–15% of people with Parkinson's have a mutation, or a change, in one of the genes that has been linked to Parkinson's. But even in people who don't have a specific change in one of these genes, the gene can sometimes still work differently compared to someone without Parkinson's. This has led researchers to look at using drugs that can change the way these genes work.

Dr Jesse Cedarbaum from the Yale School of Medicine spoke about two genes that are currently the target of new emerging therapies:

SNCA1

This gene provides the instructions for making a protein called alpha-synuclein. In Parkinson's, misformed alpha-synuclein can start to clump together and cause damage to the cells. An avenue of research is looking at finding ways to stop this happening, by sticking a drug or a protein to the ends of the alpha-synuclein protein and preventing it from clumping.

There are a number of new therapies being tested which aim to do this, including a vaccine. Vaxxinity recently showed that an early trial of vaccine UB-312 was safe, but we need more research to understand whether it is efficient in preventing clumps of alpha-synuclein forming.

LRRK2

In some people with Parkinson's, the LRRK2 gene becomes hyperactive and starts causing disruption to the normal working of the cell. So researchers are looking at ways to try and reduce its activity.

One drug being investigated for this is DNL151. This drug has already passed an initial phase of safety testing, and we look forward to hearing about a new, phase 2 trial to understand more about how this might provide a benefit for people with Parkinson's.

Immune therapies

The immune system is the body's natural defence mechanism, protecting us against infection from bacteria, viruses and much more. But for some people, the immune system becomes too active, and starts attacking healthy cells in the body. In this case, it might be necessary for the individual to take an immunosuppressant — a drug which reduces their immune response.

Researchers spotted that people who had been prescribed immunosuppressants were less likely to develop Parkinson's. Looking at brain scans of people with Parkinson's, they could see that some people had an excess of inflammation in some of their brain cells. This led researchers to study whether some anti-inflammatory drugs might also be useful for people with Parkinson's.



Dr Caroline Williams-Gray from the University of Cambridge shared some of her research which is looking at using an anti-inflammatory drug called azathioprine for people with Parkinson's. Azathioprine works to reduce the number of immune cells being produced in the body. This in turn can prevent an overload of immune cells in the brain. The AZA-PD trial is looking to see whether azathioprine can reduce the inflammation in the brain, but also slow progression of Parkinson's.

What causes Parkinson's

The majority of people have Parkinson's with no known cause, known as idiopathic Parkinson's. But researchers believe that it is a complex mix of genetic and environmental factors.

Alpha-synuclein is the troublesome protein associated with Parkinson's that forms into sticky clumps and gradually damages dopamine-producing neurons in the brain over time.

There is one theory that in some people, toxic clumps of alpha-synuclein form in the gut first and then travel to the brain, and in other people with Parkinson's, the clumps form in the brain and then travel to the gut. The theory suggests that for some people, gastrointestinal issues such as constipation may appear before other hallmark symptoms of Parkinson's like tremor.

Other neurological conditions, such as Alzheimer's and cerebrovascular conditions have also been suggested to be associated with some gastrointestinal issues.

By comparing medical records of people with and without neurodegenerative conditions, the researchers aimed to determine which

gastrointestinal issues may increase the risk of developing Parkinson's.

What did the researchers do?

Using a nationwide US medical network, researchers collected medical records of people from 4 different groups:

- People with Parkinson's with no known cause
- People with Alzheimer's
- People with cerebrovascular diseases, such as strokes and aneurysms
- People with none of these conditions

They matched the medical records of people with Parkinson's against each of the other conditions based on age, sex, race and ethnicity. Within their medical histories, they looked at who had any of 18 gastrointestinal issues, such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, gastroparesis (delayed gastric emptying), trouble swallowing, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), appendectomy and diarrhoea. They did this to see whether any of the groups were more likely to have a certain gastrointestinal issue.

Then they reshuffled the groups and created 18 different groups, 1 for each gastrointestinal issue. Anyone with one of these were allocated to their relevant group and then matched up with someone who didn't have a gut issue. Over the next 5 years, those without any gut issues were monitored to see if they developed Parkinson's.

What were the results?

All of the gastrointestinal issues were significantly increased in people with Parkinson's compared to those without any conditions. Some of these with the most significant increase were delayed gastric emptying, diarrhoea and constipation. Compared to people with Alzheimer's and cerebrovascular disease, trouble swallowing, IBS with constipation and IBS without diarrhoea were all issues that had a significantly higher presence in people with Parkinson's.

After following the groups without any gut issues for 5 years, the results suggested that those with trouble swallowing, delayed stomach emptying, IBS without diarrhoea, a dilated bowel or constipation had a higher risk of developing Parkinson's in comparison to Alzheimer's and cerebrovascular disease. This suggests that a number of the gut issues are linked more closely to Parkinson's than other similar conditions.

How could these results help with our understanding of Parkinson's?

This study adds to our knowledge on the complex relationship between gut issues and Parkinson's. Further research is now needed to understand why these gastrointestinal issues are linked to a higher risk of developing Parkinson's, and whether treating these gut issues could potentially prevent Parkinson's from developing.

Claire Bale, Associate Director of Research at Parkinson's UK said:

"The findings add further weight to the growing evidence that problems like constipation, difficulty swallowing and delayed stomach emptying may be early warning signs of Parkinson's.

"Understanding how and why gut issues appear in the early stages of Parkinson's could open up opportunities for early detection and treatment approaches that target the gut to improve symptoms and even slow or stop the progression of the condition."

As you can see, there is plenty going on in research. We will circulate the latest bulletins and publicise any interesting lectures on line.

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