

Parkinson's can lead to anxiety and other non-motor symptoms, even early on

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While movement problems are the main symptom of Parkinson's disease, a new study shows that even early in the course of disease people frequently experience many non-motor symptoms such as drooling, anxiety and constipation. The study is published in the January 15, 2013, print issue of *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

"Oftentimes people with early Parkinson's don't even mention these symptoms to their doctors, and doctors don't ask about them, yet many times they can be treated effectively," said study author Tien K. Khoo, PhD, of Newcastle University in the United Kingdom.

The study compared 159 people with newly diagnosed Parkinson's disease to 99 people of similar ages who did not have the condition. Participants were asked whether they experienced any of the 30 non-motor symptoms screened for, including [sexual problems](#), [sleep problems](#) and [gastrointestinal problems](#).

Those with Parkinson's disease had an average of eight of the non-motor problems, compared to three for the people who did not have the disorder. Among the most common symptoms for those with Parkinson's disease were drooling, urinary urgency, constipation, anxiety and a reduced [sense of smell](#). These likely represent other symptoms of Parkinson's that may be present even before the diagnosis is made.

A total of 56 percent of the people with Parkinson's had problems with

excess saliva or drooling, compared to 6 percent of those without the disease. A total of 42 percent of those with Parkinson's had constipation, compared to 7 percent of the [control group](#). For anxiety, it was 43 percent compared to 10 percent.

"These results show that Parkinson's affects many systems in the body, even in its earliest stages," Khoo said. "Often these symptoms affect people's quality of life just as much if not more than the movement problems that come with the disease. Both doctors and patients need to bring these symptoms up and consider available treatments."

Provided by American Academy of Neurology

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