

Consultant to lead largest ever study into pain in Parkinson's

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Salford Royal Consultant Neurologist and University of Manchester academic Dr Monty Silverdale is to launch the largest ever study of pain in Parkinson's Disease.

The groundbreaking study, to begin this September, will make a detailed assessment of [chronic pain](#) in Parkinson's patients – a symptom that is hugely under-recognised but has a major impact. More than half of all people with the disease also experience chronic pain – about 127,000 people in the UK have Parkinson's, one person in every 500.

It will run in conjunction with two other major UK studies into the progressive neurological disorder – one looking at different symptoms in

3,000 patients, and a second aimed at improving the diagnosis of Parkinson's. Some patients taking part in these studies will be asked to complete a pain questionnaire, collecting vital information about the sort of pain they experience.

A small number of participants will also undergo a painless five-minute [eye examination](#) so researchers can look at the small nerves in the surface of the eye for any signs of small fibre [neuropathy](#), which shows [nerve cells](#) in the body have been damaged.

It's thought the chronic pain associated with Parkinson's may be caused by this or by subtle genetic variations – for example small changes in certain [genes](#) have been shown to increase the risk of chronic pain in people without Parkinson's but it's not yet known whether this is the case for people with Parkinson's.

Dr Silverdale, also an honorary lecturer in Neuroscience at the Institute of Brain Behaviour and Mental Health at The University of Manchester, said: "Pain is a very disabling symptom for more than half our patients with Parkinson's Disease. The aim of our study is to increase understanding of pain so in time we can develop improved treatments which will improve the [quality of life](#) for our patients."

Dr Silverdale will be talking about the study at the Salford Research Day at Salford Royal on Friday September 13, which is open to those working in healthcare or involved with research projects based in Salford, including those employed by collaborating institutions. Registration is open at bit.ly/RDsrd13.

The pain study is being funded by Parkinson's UK and will continue for four years at 70 sites around the UK.

Dr Kieran Breen, Parkinson's UK Director of Research and Innovation

said: "Pain can often be a part of everyday life for people living with Parkinson's. Despite this, research into pain and Parkinson's has been largely neglected and as a result very little is understood about why those with the condition experience chronic pain.

"We hope that this new research will take us one step closer to understanding not only why people with Parkinson's can experience chronic pain, but also to pave the way for developing new and better treatments for pain management.

"We look forward to seeing the results of this pioneering study which will hopefully help to create a lasting legacy for the 127,000 people living with Parkinson's in the UK."

Provided by University of Manchester

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