

Back to the basics: regular exercise matters in parkinson's disease: results from the National Parkinson Foundation QII registry study.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND:

There is a substantial interest in the impact of exercise on reduction of disability and rate of progression of Parkinson's disease (PD).

OBJECTIVE:

The primary aim was to describe exercise habits of PD patients and factors associated with greater levels of exercise. The secondary aim was to explore whether regular exercise is associated with a slower decline of function, disease-related quality of life, and caregiver burden.

METHODS:

The National Parkinson's Foundation (NPF) QII Registry data was used to analyze variables that correlate with levels of exercise in PD patients across disease severity. Subjects were categorized into three groups: non-exercisers (0 min/week), low exercisers (1-150 min/week), and regular exercisers (>150 min/week). Health related outcomes, disease metrics, and demographic factors associated with exercise were examined using bivariate analyses. Multiple regression models controlled for disease duration, severity, and cognitive function. An exploratory analysis was completed on the association of baseline level of exercise with health outcomes at one year follow up.

RESULTS:

4866 subjects were included in the baseline analysis and 2252 subjects who had second visits were included in the longitudinal data. Regular exercisers at baseline were associated with better QOL, mobility, and physical function, less progression of disease, less caregiver burden and less cognitive decline one year later, after controlling for demographic and disease severity variables.

CONCLUSIONS:

This study provides important preliminary evidence of the beneficial effects of regular exercise in a large PD cohort. Longitudinal studies will be essential to confirm findings.