

Research Roundup

This month, we share news that the phase 3 trial of the repurposed drug, ambroxol, is underway. Plus the latest research events and opportunities to get involved.

Research news

Phase 3 trial of ambroxol is underway

In 2023 we announced we would be joining forces with Cure Parkinson's, alongside its strategic partners Van Andel Institute (VAI) and the John Black Charitable Foundation (JBCF) to co-fund a clinical trial called ASPro-PD looking at the potential of a cough medicine called ambroxol to treat Parkinson's.

After initial delays, we're now pleased to share that the first participant has started on the ASPro-PD study, which will involve them taking either ambroxol or a placebo (dummy) drug. This marks an exciting start for the study, which will assess whether ambroxol could slow or even stop the progression of Parkinson's.

What is ambroxol?

In 2009 researchers discovered that a medicine commonly used to treat coughs and sore throats, ambroxol, could also be used to treat Parkinson's.

What are the next steps?

330 people with Parkinson's will receive ambroxol or a placebo 'dummy' drug for 2 years. After this, all participants will be given ambroxol for 6 months. Neither participants nor their doctors will know whether they are receiving the trial drug or the placebo drug. Both ambroxol and the placebo drug will be taken in the form of a tablet 3 times a day.

How can I get involved?

The ASPro-PD research team is reaching out to people who are eligible to take part and who have already pre-registered through the PD Frontline study. This is a study where people are asked to supply a saliva swab, which is then studied to look for changes in certain genes. People who meet the criteria for ASPro-PD, and have

already taken part in PD Frontline will be invited to visit one of 15 study sites over England, Scotland and Wales. You will be contacted directly if you fit these criteria.

If you haven't already registered and taken part in PD Frontline, you may not be able to join the ASPro-PD study. However, you can still register to get genetically tested by PD Frontline and explore other research opportunities through the Take Part Hub. Search the Take Part Hub: www.parkinsons.org.uk/take-part-hub.

Ambroxol isn't currently recommended for Parkinson's

While past trials have shown promise, there is still more research needed to show if ambroxol can be a safe and effective treatment for Parkinson's. This includes safe testing of dosages and frequencies. Parkinson's UK does not recommend you take any medications without a prescription. You can find answers to other questions about ambroxol and the ASPro-PD trial on the Parkinson's UK website:

www.bit.ly/FAQASPro

Par-Con 2025: save the date

We're bringing back Par-Con, our 2 day event about living well with Parkinson's. You'll be able to join us online or in person at The Vox, Birmingham on 24 and 25 October. Tickets will be available later in the summer.

Take Part in Research

Understanding how reduced facial expression affects communication

Researchers from the University of Suffolk are exploring how communication is affected by problems with facial expressions in Parkinson's. They want to understand how this affects well-being and the impact on people with Parkinson's and their loved ones.

Who do the researchers need?

- 15 people with Parkinson's who experience problems with facial expression. For example, a "masked" face or involuntary facial movements.

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- 15 loved ones of people with Parkinson's who experience problems with facial expression. You must have known your loved one with Parkinson's before their diagnosis.
- Unfortunately, those with a history of stroke or Bell's Palsy are unable to take part.

What is involved?

- Taking part in an online or telephone interview with the researcher, which will last for up to 1 hour:
 - The researcher will ask you questions about your experiences and the strategies you have found useful to help communicate emotion
 - The interview can be spread over multiple sessions if requested
 - You will be reimbursed with a £50 voucher for being interviewed
 - Following the interview, you will be invited to check a summary of the researcher's findings. If you check these, you will be reimbursed with a £25 voucher as a thank you for your time.

Interested in taking part?

To take part, please contact Abigail Webb by email at **a.webb6@uos.ac.uk** or phone **07545 760 585**.

The deadline for taking part in this research is **9 May 2025**.