Ethnicity and non-motor symptoms in Parkinson’s

**Project information**

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<tr>
<th>Lead researcher</th>
<th>Professor K Ray Chaudhuri</th>
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<td>Location</td>
<td>King’s College London</td>
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<td>Cost</td>
<td>£33,233 over a year</td>
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<td>Start date</td>
<td>October 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of project</td>
<td>Innovation grant</td>
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<td>Project code</td>
<td>K-1406</td>
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**Project background**

We know that Parkinson’s is a condition that varies hugely between individuals but we still don’t understand exactly why this is. Research has already uncovered variations between different ethnic groups living with diabetes, high blood pressure and multiple sclerosis but there has so far been very little research into how Parkinson’s may affect different ethnic groups and how they respond to Parkinson’s medication.

- **Early clues to ethnic differences.** Ray’s initial research suggests that people with Parkinson’s of black African, Caribbean or South Asian heritage may respond less well to Parkinson’s medication than white Caucasians.

- **More non-motor symptoms?** Ray also found that people of black African, Caribbean or South Asian origins experienced a greater range of non-motor symptoms such as memory and thinking problems, sleep problems and hallucinations.
What the researchers are doing

Ray and his team aim to find out more about how Parkinson’s affects different ethnic groups. This will be the largest study of its kind ever attempted. The team will recruit people with Parkinson’s of black African, Caribbean, South Asian and white Caucasian heritage and analyse their experiences of Parkinson’s.

The team will gather information from each ethnic group including:

- The motor and non-motor symptoms experienced and measuring the severity of these symptoms.
- The impact of these non-motor symptoms on quality of life in each group and how a delay in diagnosis of these symptoms may affect those with Parkinson’s.
- How each group responds to Parkinson’s medication.

Lastly a smaller group of participants will be invited to have a brain scan and provide blood samples which will be vital for future genetic studies of ethnic groups in Parkinson’s.

How the research will help people with Parkinson’s?

As this is the most detailed study of ethnicity yet, Ray hopes this research will shed light on the experiences of Parkinson’s in different ethnic groups. Understanding the differences in types of symptoms and response to medication will ultimately help clinicians to provide the right care for individuals of different backgrounds.

Ray also hopes this research will stimulate larger international studies of ethnicity and Parkinson’s and more awareness of the challenges they may present amongst health care professionals.

Find out more about our research, visit our website: parkinsons.org.uk/research

Or contact the Parkinson’s UK research team at:

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