

Chapter 1

Depression, Apathy, Anhedonia, and Fatigue in Parkinson's Disease

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Depression in PD

Definition and Pathophysiology

Definition

Depression is a common neuropsychiatric disorder characterized by the persistence and pervasiveness of a spectrum of symptoms that can variously aggregate. These symptoms include: depressed mood, loss of interest/pleasure, loss or gain in weight or appetite, insomnia or hypersomnia, psychomotor agitation, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, diminished ability to think or concentrate, indecisiveness, thoughts of death, and suicidal ideation.

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Depressive disorders are common in Parkinson's disease (PD) (see section "Epidemiology") and impact negatively on disability [1, 2] and quality of life [3], accounting for approximately 40 % of the variability in quality of life scores [4]. Symptoms of depressive disorders in PD span across a spectrum of severity and of variety, but no distinctive profile has been identified [5]; nevertheless guilt or feelings of failure are not common, and the risk to commit suicide is low despite the frequent suicidal ideation [6]. Mood disorders in PD include major depression, minor depression, dysthymic disorders, and subthreshold depression [7, 8]; subthreshold (or subsyndromal) depression in PD identifies a clinical picture of depressive symptoms that does not meet the criteria for major depression, minor depression, or dysthymic disorder but nonetheless has a clinical relevance; furthermore patients with PD suffering from depressive symptoms only during off states may be diagnosed as having subthreshold depression [9].

Despite the importance of recognizing mood disorders in PD, their diagnosis is greatly complicated since physical or cognitive symptoms of the neurological disorder overlap with symptoms of depression. The application of the criteria of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV (DSM-IV) [10] (Table 1.1) for the diagnosis of depression in PD might generate an overdiagnosis, due to the overlapping of the DSM-IV criteria with somatic and cognitive symptoms of PD. Furthermore, little is known about the contribution of either apathy or anhedonia or their association in the diagnosis of depression in PD. The diagnostic criteria for depression in PD were reviewed by the workgroup established by the National Institute for Neurological Disease and Stroke and the National Institute of Mental Health in 2006 [7]. The workgroup recommended using an inclusive approach in assessing symptoms when using the DSM criteria to diagnose depression to enhance reliability. An inclusive approach means considering all symptoms as related to depression, regardless of their overlap with PD or other medical conditions. Briefly, the workgroup recommended:

- I. The diagnosis of depression in PD should be made according to DSM-IV criteria using an inclusive approach. Subthreshold depression should be included.
- II. The timing of assessing should be specified (on versus off periods).
- III. Informants should be used for cognitively impaired patients.
- IV. Decreased interest should be omitted as core affective symptom when diagnosing minor or subthreshold depression.

The workgroup concluded that the recommended guidelines for diagnosing depression in PD require further assessment and validation as research tools and in clinical practice.

Pathophysiology

Two major pathophysiological and not mutually exclusive mechanisms have been proposed for depression in PD: (1) a nonspecific reactive comorbid depression in PD, patients develop depression as a reaction to a chronic debilitating illness, and (2) specific comorbid depression in PD, depression is related to the pathophysiology of PD.

Table 1.1 Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders 4th edition criteria for major and minor depression

<i>Major depressive episode</i>
A. Persistence and general pervasiveness of five or more of nine potential symptoms during the same 2-week period that represent a change from previous functioning; at least one of the symptoms is either (1) depressed mood or (2) loss of interest or pleasure that is present most of the day, nearly every day, as indicated by either subjective report or observation made by others
1. Depressed mood
2. Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities
3. Loss or gain in weight or appetite
4. Insomnia or hypersomnia
5. Psychomotor agitation or retardation
6. Fatigue or loss of energy
7. Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt
8. Diminished ability to think or concentrate or indecisiveness
9. Recurrent thoughts of death, recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan, or a suicide attempt or a specific plan for committing suicide
B. Symptoms do not meet criteria for a DSM mixed episode (presence of phenomena of both a manic and a depressed episode)
C. Symptoms cause clinically significant distress or functional impairment
D. Symptoms are not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance or a general medical condition
E. Symptoms are not better accounted for by bereavement
<i>Minor depressive episode</i>
Requires only two of the nine symptoms above, but one must be either depression/sadness or loss of interest/pleasure

The finding that depression can develop in any stage of PD and even may antecede the onset of motor symptoms [11] would not support the first hypothesis; in addition, when compared with subjects affected by other chronic conditions matched for disability, PD patients show more severe depressive symptoms [12]. Therefore, even if motor and nonmotor disability in PD might contribute to depression, it cannot be considered the unique determinant, suggesting that the cause of depression is intrinsic to the pathophysiology of PD. A combination of dopaminergic, noradrenergic, and serotonergic system dysfunction has been thought to underlie the development of depression in PD [13, 14].

Studies on dopamine transporter (DAT) availability in depressed PD patients have produced conflicting results. Depression in PD has been associated with higher loss of striatal dopamine transporter availability [15, 16] maybe due to greater dopaminergic degeneration in PD patients with depressive symptoms as compared with PD patients without. Other studies have found an association between depressive symptoms and increased dopamine transporter availability [17, 18]. These inconsistencies might be due to methodological heterogeneities among studies and/or to the finding that striatal dopaminergic dysfunction in PD may be itself heterogeneous, related with some depressive symptoms but not all [19]. Apart from such discrepancies, these results confirm the pivotal role exerted by dopaminergic pathways in the occurrence of depression in PD.

In addition to dopamine, other monoamines seem to have a role in the pathogenesis of depression in PD. In a recent positron emission tomography (PET) study, serotonin transporter binding was found increased in PD patients with depressive symptoms in limbic structures and caudal raphe nuclei, suggesting a lower serotonin availability [20]. Accordingly, another study, using transcranial sonography, has shown reduced echogenicity of the dorsal raphe in subjects with depression preceding PD motor onset [21]. Finally, in regard to noradrenergic contribution, another PET study found loss of dopamine and noradrenaline innervations in the locus coeruleus and in limbic areas in depressed PD patients [22], and, consistently, a neuropathological study demonstrated neuronal loss and gliosis in the noradrenergic locus coeruleus [23].

In line with this model of dysfunctional monoamine pathways projecting to cortical areas, altered brain metabolism or blood flow in the frontal cortex has been associated with depression in PD [24–27]. Accordingly, structural neuroimaging techniques have shown gray matter loss and white matter abnormalities in the prefrontal, temporal, and some limbic regions in depressed PD patients [28, 29]. Finally a very recent resting-state functional magnetic resonance study (RS fMRI) revealed reduced functional connectivity in the prefrontal-limbic network in PD patients with depression as compared with PD patients without [30].

Epidemiology

Depressive disorders are common in PD and may even precede the diagnosis of PD in up to 30 % of patients [31–33]. In addition, subjects with depression were found to be 3.14 times more likely to develop PD [34]. Estimates of prevalence of depression in PD vary considerably in published studies mostly due to the heterogeneity of population included and to the criteria used for defining depression in PD (e.g., DSM-IV criteria, clinical rating scales, etc.). In a large systematic review of the prevalence of depression in PD including 36 studies, the weighted prevalence of major depressive disorder was 17 %, minor depression 22 %, dysthymia 13 %, and clinically significant depression 35 % [35]. Prevalence of depressive symptoms and of major depression of more recent studies is reported in Table 1.2. Depressive disorders in PD patients as well as in the general population develop in the context of multiple interacting risk factors. PD-specific risk factors for depression include more severe motor symptoms, greater PD-related disability, more advanced disease stage, longer disease duration, higher levodopa equivalent dosage, presence of hallucinations, cognitive impairment, sleep disorders, and dysautonomia [44–48]. In addition, older age, longer duration, and increased severity of PD were found to contribute to care dependency in patients with untreated depression [49].

A recent cross-sectional study, aimed at building a model for risk factors of depression in PD, found that three PD-specific factors (longer disease duration, more severe motor symptoms, levodopa use) and six nonspecific factors (female gender,

Table 1.2 Frequency rates of depressive symptoms/depression in PD [36–43]

Study	Population	Depressive symptom frequency (%)	Major depression frequency (%)	Scale/criteria used for assessing depressive symptoms/depression
Barone et al. (2007) [36]	1,023 PD patients	27.8	9.2	BDI, HAM/DSM IV
Farabaugh et al. (2009) [37]	158 PD patients	58	NA	HANDS
Riedel et al. (2010) [38]	1,449 PD patients	33.6	NA	MADRS
Inoue et al. (2010) [39]	105 PD patients	38	4.7	BDI/DSM IV
Nègre-Pagès et al. (2010) [40]	450 PD patients	40	NA	HADS
van der Hoek et al. (2011) [41]	256 PD patients	36.3	12.9	BDI
Yamanishi et al. (2013) [42]	117 PD patients	56	NA	BDI
Weerkamp et al. (2013) [43]	73 nursing home residents with PD	45	NA	BDI

BDI Beck Depression Inventory, *HAM* Hamilton Depression Rating scale, *DSM IV* Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4th edition, *NA* not assessed, *HANDS* Harvard Department of Psychiatry/National Depression Screening Day Scale, *MADRS* Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale, *HADS* Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale

personal or family history of depression, worse disability, and more affected cognition) were significantly associated with depression; interestingly, nonspecific factors were more strongly related to depression than PD-specific factors [50].

Assessment Tools

In clinical practice, the use of depressive symptom rating scales can improve identification of depression in parkinsonian patients without substituting clinical criteria [51]. Clinician-rated depression scales such as the 24-item and 17-item Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HAM-D), the Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale (MADRS), and item depression of the Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale (UPDRS) and self-reported scales such as the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and 30-item and 15-item Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) are considered to be valid in PD [52–64].

Recently, the Patients Health Questionnaire-9 has shown to be an adequate instrument for screening depression in PD [65, 66].

A recent study compared the performance of six self-reported (BDI-II, GDS-30, Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Rating Scale-Revised, Inventory of Depressive Symptoms Self Report (IDS-SR), PHQ-9, part I of UPDRS) and three clinician-rated (HAMD-17, Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology-Clinician-Rated, and MADRS) depression scales in community-based parkinsonian patients against psychiatric diagnosis based on DSM-IV-TR criteria [51]. The finding revealed that all self-reported scales, mainly BDI-II, and clinician-rated scales had strong psychometric properties and thus may be useful for depression screening with their cutoff. The study also provided information about the time needed to complete self-report depression scales in PD, and therefore it is a useful guide for the clinician to choose the most appropriate depression rating scale [51].

PD Nonmotor-Associated Features

There is controversy about the relationship between depression and cognitive dysfunctions in PD patients. Three possible patterns emerge: (1) depression influences cognition in PD, in this case depression would influence the severity of cognitive impairment [44, 67–76]; (2) depression and cognition are independent, although many symptoms of the two conditions might overlap in PD [31, 77–80]; and (3) cognitive dysfunctions, that are related to PD neuropathology, are the substrate of a depressive disorder in PD, in this case a distinct pattern of cognitive impairment (quality) would be associated with depression.

The relationship between depression and executive dysfunctions is generally considered as depression affecting severity of cognition. However, frontal dysfunctions related to neuropathology of PD might be responsible for depressive symptoms, especially considering that DSM-IV criteria for major depression diagnosis do not separate anhedonia from apathy. Santangelo et al. [81] found that depressed PD patients with high level of apathy and/or anhedonia scored significantly lower on frontal tasks than patients with depressed mood (DSM-IV, criterion 1) and nondepressed patients. These findings suggest that the combination of apathy, anhedonia, and frontal lobe dysfunctions might contribute to the overdiagnosis of depression in PD. Varanese et al. [82] found that apathy was not associated with executive impairment in PD patients. These findings support the idea that apathy and depression are two independent nonmotor symptoms of PD.

Management

Treatment options for depressive symptoms in PD should be based on the specific characteristics of the patient. The first step should include a review of all drugs taken by the patient in order to identify and possibly eliminate those medications

that could contribute to affective symptoms; then, the optimization of dopaminergic treatment should be considered, since this strategy is often effective in cases of subthreshold (e.g., “off”-related nonmotor fluctuations including depression) and mild depression. In regard to dopaminergic treatment, a number of open-label studies have suggested that both pramipexole and ropinirole exert antidepressant effect in PD patients [83–86]. A recent large 12-week randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study in PD, enrolling patients with depressive symptoms (15-item GDS score ≥ 5 or UPDRS Part I depression item score ≥ 2), compared pramipexole (0.375–3 mg/day, $N=139$) and placebo ($N=148$) and showed that pramipexole significantly improved BDI scores ($p=0.01$) and UPDRS motor scores ($p=0.003$); statistical analysis, adjusting for UPDRS, suggested a direct effect of pramipexole on depression [87]. A randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind study of ropinirole extended-release preparation [88] also showed improvement on BDI scores as compared to placebo; nevertheless, the primary outcomes of this study were motor fluctuations; therefore, patients were not selected according to criteria for depression. Similarly, a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study aimed at assessing rotigotine efficacy on early motor dysfunction and sleep problems in PD [89] found, as additional efficacy outcome, greater improvement with rotigotine than placebo on BDI-II scores and on mood/cognition domain score of nonmotor symptoms scale (NMS).

The evidence-based data regarding the therapeutic efficacy of antidepressants for treating depression in PD are still equivocal. A systematic review and meta-analysis of ten studies showed uncertainty and lack of strong evidence supporting the clinical efficacy of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) for depression in PD [90]. A successive evidence-based review concluded that tricyclic antidepressants (TCA) are likely efficacious and possibly useful; nevertheless side effects are common [91]. Recently, a large randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of antidepressants in PD has provided Class I evidence that both paroxetine (SSRI) and venlafaxine (a serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor, SNRI) significantly improve depression in subjects with PD without worsening motor function [92]. Double-blind, placebo-controlled studies of antidepressant drugs in PD are summarized in Table 1.3.

Non-pharmacological interventions for depression in PD include cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS). The largest study on CBT for depression in PD was a 10-week randomized controlled trial of 80 patients that showed significant improvement in the treated group as compared with the control group [98]. rTMS has been proposed as a technique to improve mood in PD, but results are still preliminary and potentially confounded by the possible effect on motor and cognitive function. A double-blind sham-controlled study of the left prefrontal rTMS showed significant improvement on depression scales [99]. In double-blind studies, comparing dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) rTMS and fluoxetine (using placebo and sham rTMS, respectively), both interventions resulted comparably efficacious in improving depressive symptoms [100, 101].

Table 1.3 Antidepressants in PD: double-blind, placebo-controlled studies [92–97]

Study	N	Drug	Daily dose (mg)	Results	Worsening parkinsonism
Wermuth et al. (1998) [93]	18/19	Citalopram/placebo	10	Citalopram = placebo	No
Leentjens et al. (2003) [94]	6/6	Setraline/placebo	50	Setraline = placebo	No
Weintraub et al. (2010) [95]	28/27	Atomoxetine/placebo	80	Atomoxetine = placebo	No
Devos et al. (2008) [96]	16/15/17	Desimipramine/citalopram/placebo	75 20	Improvement for both drugs	No
Menza et al. (2009) [97]	18/17/17	Paroxetine/nortriptyline/placebo	37.5 75	Improvements for nortriptyline but not for paroxetine	No
Richard et al. (2012) [92]	42/34/39	Paroxetine/venlafaxine/placebo	40 225	Improvement for both drugs	No

Apathy in PD

Definition and Pathophysiology

Definition

Apathy refers to a combination of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive features that originate from reduced interest/motivation in goal-directed behaviors and from lack of emotional responsiveness. The clinical picture of apathy is characterized by loss of self-activation or self-initiated behavior, indifference, impassibility, and flattened affect.

Apathy is one of the most common nonmotor symptoms in PD, occurring since early stages of disease, and increasing in frequency as the disease progresses (see section “[Epidemiology](#)”). It has been associated with decreased quality of life and poor performances on activity of daily living [102]. The diagnosis of apathy in PD is challenging since it is commonly associated with disorders such as depression, cognitive impairment, and fatigue; in addition, many features of such disorders overlap with symptoms of apathy.

Recently two sets of diagnostic criteria have been validated in PD [103, 104]. The criteria used in these two studies are similar and include: (1) diminished motivation compared to baseline level of functioning; (2) reduction of goal-directed behavior, goal-directed cognitive activity, and emotion; (3) symptoms sufficiently severe to cause significant impairment of personal, social, or occupational function; and (4) symptoms not attributable to the effects of physical disability, level of consciousness, or medication.

Pathophysiology

The pathophysiological mechanism underlying apathy in PD is still not fully understood. Apathy is probably related with a dysfunction in the mesocorticolimbic circuit including the ventral striatum, anterior and posterior cingulate (AC, PC), and inferior prefrontal gyrus since these structures are key components of the brain motivational and reward system [105]. Recently, a morphological magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) study on 55 PD patients [106] showed that high apathy scores were correlated with low gray matter (GM) density in the right PC gyrus and the bilateral inferior frontal gyrus; based on the involvement of the cingulate and premotor cortices, the authors suggested that “autoactivation” processing deficits could be associated with apathy in PD. Consistently, in an 11C-raclopride PET study, apathy scores after deep brain stimulation of the subthalamic nucleus (STN-DBS) in PD patients correlated with a decreased dopamine transmission particularly in the dorsolateral and orbitofrontal cortex, AC and PC [107], suggesting that apathy in PD would be underlied by greater mesocorticolimbic dopaminergic denervation. The involvement of mesocorticolimbic networks in apathy has been further corroborated by a recent fluorodeoxyglucose PET study on 45 PD patients neither depressed nor demented [108]; in addition, this study found a negative correlation

between metabolism within the bilateral posterior lobe of the cerebellum and apathy scores on AES, supporting the view of a topographic segmentation of the cerebellum, with some structures implicated in motivation and behavioral regulation. Finally, further evidence suggesting that mesocorticolimbic dopaminergic denervation would have a key role in the pathogenesis of apathy derived from studies on DBS in PD patients. STN-DBS can induce or worsen apathy in some parkinsonian patients [107, 109]: reduction of dopaminergic agents and/or stimulation of the associative and limbic regions has been proposed as mechanisms underlying apathy after surgery [110].

Epidemiology

Apathy is one of the most common nonmotor symptoms of PD, with prevalence rates ranging from 13.9 to 70 % and a mean prevalence of 35 % (for a recent review see Santangelo et al. [111]). Several factors may contribute to variable prevalence rates found across studies. First, apathy frequently occurs with depression and with cognitive impairment, particularly dysexecutive syndromes; thus, studies not excluding depression and/or dementia could overestimate its frequency. Second, apathy rate can vary based on the PD population studied (e.g., community sample versus tertiary movement disorders clinic sample). Finally, apathy frequency might be biased by the different tools used for diagnosis (e.g., specific, nonspecific scales, clinical criteria, etc.).

Apathy is common in PD since early stages. Recently, Pedersen and colleagues [112] reported an apathy prevalence rate of 22.9 % in 175 newly diagnosed PD patients with a prevalence of “pure apathy” (i.e., apathy without comorbid depression and dementia) of 14.3 %.

In regard to the mutual relationship among apathy, motor symptoms, and nonmotor symptoms in PD, a recent 4-year longitudinal study showed that at follow-up, apathetic PD patients were more frequently depressed and demented than never-apathetic patients; moreover, dementia at baseline and a more rapid decline in speech and axial symptoms during follow-up were independent risk factors for incident apathy [113] (see also section “**PD nonmotor-associated features**”). Finally, two recent studies found that patients with right predominant PD motor laterality were at higher risk of suffering from apathy as compared with those with left predominant motor symptoms [114, 115].

Assessment Tools

In clinical practice and research, several rating scales are available to identify and measure severity of apathy in PD patients. Among questionnaires, Apathy Evaluation Scale (AES) [116], Apathy Scale (AS) [117], Lille Apathy Rating Scale (LARS) [118],

Apathy Inventory (AI) [119], Item 7 of the Neuropsychiatric Inventory (NPI) [120], and Item 4 (motivation/initiative) of the UPDRS [121] can be used in PD patients.

Recently, a task force commissioned by the Movement Disorders Society (MDS) [122] reviewed the psychometric properties of the abovementioned scales and reported that both AS and apathy items of UPDRS fulfilled criteria for “recommended scale” for screening apathy, but Item 4 of the UPDRS can be only used as a screening question with caution because it consists of a single item [52]. The AES has good internal consistency [123], and it has been classified as “suggested scale” because only information on reliability but not on validity is now available. The AI has been poorly studied, and it has been classified as “listed scale”; its brevity may make it an attractive and useful instrument to measure apathy in PD. The LARS was developed for PD patients; it has good internal consistency, adequate test-retest, inter-rater reliability, good sensitivity, and specificity in PD population [124]. It is the longest of the all available apathy rating scales, and it was classified as a “suggested scale” by MDS review. The Item 7 of the NPI showed good inter-rater agreement, but other clinimetric properties were not investigated in PD; therefore, it can be considered as a “suggested scale.”

PD Nonmotor-Associated Features

Three prospective studies found a close relationship between cognitive dysfunction and apathy. In particular, dementia [113] and reduced inhibitory control assessed by means of Stroop Test [125] were found to be independent risk factors for incident apathy, whereas apathy may be a predictive factor for cognitive decline over time in non-demented, nondepressed PD patients [126]. The association between apathy and executive/frontal dysfunction is consistently found in PD patients at early and advanced stages of disease [82, 112, 117, 123, 125, 127–129]. Few studies investigated other cognitive domains such as memory and visuospatial functions in apathetic PD patients yielding discordant results: some authors found that apathetic patients performed worse than non-aphathetic patients on the memory subtest of the Cambridge Cognitive Examination (CAMCOG) [123], on Grober and Buschke 16-item recall test [126], and on paired associative learning test [117], silhouette recognition task [112], and praxis subtest of CAMCOG [123]. Other studies did not find similar results [128]. A recent study showed a significant association between the apathy and affective component of Theory of Mind (ToM) [130], which is the ability of processing inferences about other people's emotions and feelings.

Management

There are no approved drugs for managing apathy. Since apathy is closely related to depression and cognitive impairment, first, possible comorbid depression should be treated in patients with apathy. Because of the association with depression and

cognitive impairment, pharmacologic agents most frequently administered to apathetic patients include dopaminergic drugs and acetylcholinesterase inhibitors.

Previous small open-label trials have suggested that dopaminergic agents could be effective in improving apathy in PD patients [131, 132]. A recent meta-analysis of seven randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trials of pramipexole, using the UPDRS Part I as a secondary outcome measure, showed that patients who had a baseline UPDRS Part I Item 4 score >0 (motivation, $N=570$), motivational symptoms improved in 63.2 % of patients taking pramipexole compared to 45.0 % of those taking placebo (weighted OR 2.06; $p<0.001$) [133]. Very recently, in a post hoc analysis of RECOVER study ($N=287$), Chaudhuri and collaborators [134] found significant improvement from baseline on apathy items of NMSS (“lost interest in surroundings,” “lost interest in doing things”) in the rotigotine group as compared with the placebo group. In addition, in a randomized, placebo-controlled trial ($N=37$, PD patients treated with STN-DBS), Thobois and collaborators [135] found that the dopamine agonist piribedil is effective in treating apathy.

Apart from dopaminergic agents, a randomized controlled trial evaluating efficacy of atomoxetine, a selective norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor, for treatment of clinically significant depressive symptoms in PD patients and with apathy as a secondary outcome measure, showed no benefit for either depression or apathy [95].

In regard to acetylcholinesterase inhibitors, an open-label controlled study of galantamine ($N=41$) in PD patients with dementia found significant improvement in the primary cognitive outcome measures but also in the apathy section of the NPI ($p=0.006$) [136]. Nevertheless, a subsequent double-blind, placebo-controlled study in nondemented PD subjects ($N=54$) designed to assess cognitive improvement as primary outcome did not find significant difference in apathy measures [137].

Finally, two ongoing randomized, placebo-controlled trials are evaluating efficacy of acetylcholinesterase (rivastigmine) [ClinicalTrials.gov identifier: NCT00767091; <http://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT00767091>] and MAO-B inhibitors (rasagiline) [ClinicalTrials.gov identifier: NCT00755027; <http://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT00755027>] on apathetic symptoms in PD patients.

Anhedonia in PD

Definition and Pathophysiology

Definition

Anhedonia is defined as a lowered ability to experience physical and social pleasure. It is recognized to be a core symptom of major depression [10] and is frequent in several psychiatric diseases including abstinence/intoxication with substances of abuse and schizophrenia [138, 139].

Anhedonia includes two types of pleasure deficits: anticipatory and consummatory [140]. Anticipatory anhedonia refers to the inability to experience pleasure at the thought of a future reward (“wanting”), whereas consummatory anhedonia reflects

the inability to experience pleasure while the subject is engaged in an enjoyable experience (“liking”).

In PD anhedonia has been seen as a symptom that can be part of various syndromes, such as depression, dementia, or apathy [122, 141]. To date, anhedonia in PD lacks an unambiguous and generally accepted definition, and its identification is based on specific rating scales (see section “[Assessment tools](#)”). Recent studies [142, 143] suggest that PD patients may have intact “consummatory” pleasure and altered “anticipatory” pleasure that has been frequently found associated with apathy.

Pathophysiology

Some recent studies have suggested that distinct neural networks would be involved in anticipatory and consummatory anhedonia in PD; the former type might be underlied by a dysfunction in the dopaminergic mesolimbic system including the ventral striatum and anterior cingulate cortex [22], whereas the latter one might be associated with alteration in the dopaminergic prefrontal cortex circuits [142, 144]. It is worth noting that the neural circuit involved in anticipatory anhedonia is the same that has been linked to apathy (see section “[Pathophysiology of apathy](#)”) maybe suggesting that anticipatory anhedonia could be a symptom of apathy (reduced “wanting”).

Epidemiology

Anhedonia is common in PD with a prevalence ranging from 15 % up to 79.7 % in PD patients with depression [84, 145–148]. As for depression and apathy, most prevalence differences across studies depend on methodological issues (e.g., tool and cutoff used for defining anhedonia, overlapping with other neuropsychiatric disorders, type of PD population studied).

Most studies conducted in PD patients [81, 84, 142–145, 147, 148] with the exception of one [146] suggest a significant relationship between anhedonia and other neuropsychiatric symptoms, namely, depression, apathy, and, to a less extent, cognitive dysfunction (see section “[PD nonmotor-associated features](#)”).

In regard to the possible relationship between anhedonia and motor symptom severity, some studies reported an association [84, 145] and others did not [144, 146]; this inconsistency might be due to the different PD stages of the population included in these studies.

Assessment Tools

The identification of anhedonia is difficult since it may occur on its own or as part both of depression and apathetic syndrome [122]. However, in clinical practice and research, the clinician may use several questionnaires developed for measuring

severity of anhedonia in patients with psychiatric diseases. The Chapman Scales for Physical and Social Anhedonia were used in one study on PD patients and were considered to have several shortcomings for this type of patients: the scales include items characterized by a very complex syntactic structure and were too long for patients with bradyphrenia [146]. Moreover, their clinimetric properties have not been fully investigated. The Chapman Scales were classified as listed by MDS task force [122]. To provide a short scale validated and easily applicable in clinical setting, Santangelo et al. [144] explored the clinimetric properties of the Snaith-Hamilton Pleasure Scale (SHAPS) and found it to be a reliable tool to evaluate apathy in patients with PD and other forms of parkinsonism. More recently, the psychometric properties of the Japanese version of SHAPS were also investigated [149].

PD Nonmotor-Associated Features

Several studies evidenced a strong association between anhedonia and apathetic or depressive syndromes in PD patients, indicating that reduced hedonic tone may be considered a feature of apathy [123] and of depression [81, 84, 145, 147]. Conversely, Isella et al. [146] did not find relationship between anhedonia, depression, and apathy. Increasing age, apathy, and cognitive dysfunctions were found contributing factors to anhedonia severity [144]. Recently, significant association between apathy and anxiety trait was reported [148].

As for association between anhedonia and cognitive deficits, one study on a small sample of PD patients revealed no significant correlation between anhedonia and score on frontal tasks [146]. Otherwise, Santangelo et al. [81] reported that patients with anhedonia performed worse than nondepressed patients without apathy or anhedonia on cognitive tasks tapping visuoconstructional and frontal functions. In addition, significant correlations were found between anhedonia and score on Frontal Assessment Battery (FAB) in patients with PD and other forms of parkinsonism [144]. The relationship between anhedonia and frontal dysfunctions might support the idea that anhedonia may depend on frontal lobe dysfunctions arising from alteration of prefrontal dopamine circuits.

Management

A number of open-label studies suggest that dopaminergic agents may be effective in improving hedonic tone (for a recent review see Assogna et al. [141]). Most trials focused on pramipexole may be due to its preferential action on D₃ dopaminergic receptors in the mesolimbic and prefrontal neural circuits; overall, such studies [84, 145, 147, 150] found that pramipexole was effective on depression, anhedonia, and motor symptoms. In particular, Reichmann and collaborators [150] found that PD patients switched from other dopamine agonists to pramipexole had a significant

improvement on depression and anhedonia thus suggesting that such beneficial effects would not be simply reactive responses to motor improvement but specific effects of the treatment. Nevertheless, since these studies were open label, further randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trials are needed to confirm these results.

Finally, very recently, in a post hoc analysis of RECOVER study ($N=287$), Chaudhuri and collaborators [134] found significant improvement from baseline on the anhedonia item of NMSS (“difficulty experiencing pleasure”) in the rotigotine group as compared with the placebo group.

Fatigue in PD

Definition and Pathophysiology

Definition

Fatigue has been commonly defined as an overwhelming sense of tiredness, lack of energy, and feeling of exhaustion. It is characterized by difficulty in initiating and sustaining mental and physical activities. Despite fatigue is one of the most common and disabling symptoms in neurological disorders, its identification and understanding is hampered by the lack of standard definition [151].

Fatigue is common in PD (see section “[Epidemiology](#)”). Although several features of fatigue in PD have been described, it is still unclear whether fatigue can be considered either a motor or nonmotor symptom [152]. Its identification is challenging due to the overlap with other common symptoms of PD like depression, apathy, sleep problems, and autonomic dysfunction. In addition, the presence of different components of fatigue (mental, physical) further complicates its recognition. Based on the fact that PD patients generally describe their fatigue as different from the fatigue, they had experienced prior PD onset, and Brown et al. [153] proposed an operational definition of fatigue in PD as a “feeling of abnormal and overwhelming tiredness and lack of energy, distinct both qualitatively and quantitatively from normal tiredness.” To date, identification of fatigue in PD is based on specific rating scales (see section “[Assessment tools](#)”).

Pathophysiology

The pathophysiology of fatigue in PD is still poorly understood [154]. Fatigue is commonly subdivided into a peripheral and a central component; peripheral fatigue is commonly observed in diseases involving the peripheral nervous system like myasthenia gravis, whereas central fatigue is frequently observed in several chronic diseases of the central nervous system including PD. Several findings suggest that fatigue in PD might have a minor peripheral contribution and a major component underlied by central mechanisms [154]. It is worth noting that central fatigue features in PD may overlap with a number of nonmotor symptoms like depression, apathy,

and sleep problems thus complicating the understanding of its pathophysiology. Few neuroimaging studies have addressed the pathophysiological mechanisms of central fatigue. By means of a single-photon emission computed tomography (SPECT) study, Abe and collaborators [155] reported that fatigue in PD correlated with reduced cerebral blood flow in the frontal lobe in absence of significant correlation between fatigue and depression. More recently, a PET study aimed at evaluating the dopaminergic and serotonergic contribution to fatigue in PD [156] showed that fatigue was mainly associated with denervation of serotonergic terminals in both dorsal and ventral striatum and in the thalamus; furthermore fatigue was associated with reduced dopaminergic transmission in the extra-striatal region, namely, the insula. Taken together these results could suggest that fatigue in PD would be associated with dysfunction in striatal serotonergic and extra-striatal dopaminergic neural circuits and in their projections to the frontal lobe.

Finally, fatigue in PD has been associated with abnormal primary motor cortex excitability [157], suggesting that altered cortical plasticity might be responsible for physical fatigue that would share both clinical features and pathophysiological mechanisms with bradykinesia and sequence effect.

Epidemiology

Fatigue in PD is a frequent symptom with a prevalence rate ranging from 28 to 77.6 % (Table 1.4). Most variability on frequency rates is due to methodological issues (e.g., different assessment tools, overlap with other PD symptoms, PD population studied). Fatigue can be present in every stage of disease and even may antecede the onset of motor symptoms in approximately one third of patients [164]. Fatigue has been identified as one of the most disabling symptoms in PD and has been found as an important determinant of worse quality of life [165].

Several factors have been variably associated with fatigue: female gender, postural instability gait difficulties (PIGD) phenotype, and many nonmotor symptoms like depression, anxiety, apathy, sleep disturbances, and autonomic impairment [163–165]. In addition, fatigue has been associated with reduced physical activity [166], though it is still not clear whether fatigue determines reduced physical activity or a sedentary lifestyle can favor the onset of fatigue.

Finally, available data in literature do not allow to find a definite relationship between fatigue and disease severity due to the controversial results.

Assessment Tools

Since fatigue has a multidimensional character, it is difficult to measure [167]. In clinical setting, it is possible to use several questionnaires from those generic which evaluate fatigue in a holistic manner to those specifically designed for PD [168].

Table 1.4 Frequency rates of fatigue in PD [158–163]

Study	Population	Fatigue frequency	Scale used for assessing fatigue
Friedman and Friedman (1993) [158]	58 PD patients	67 %	Fatigue severity questionnaire
Karlsen et al. (1999) [159]	233 PD patients	44.2 %	Rating scale for low energy in the NHP, 7-point scale devised to evaluate fatigue
Herlofson and Larsen (2003) [160]	66 PD patients	50 %	Fatigue severity scale
Alves et al. (2004) [161]	233 PD patients followed over a period of 8 years (from 1993 to 2001)	35.7 % at baseline	Rating scale for low energy in the NHP, 7-point scale devised to evaluate fatigue, fatigue severity scale
		55.7 % at last follow-up	
Skorvanek et al. (2013) [162]	165 PD patients	77.6 %	Multidimensional fatigue inventory
Beiske et al. (2013) [163]	176 PD patients	28 %	Fatigue questionnaire

NHP Nottingham Health Profile

Recently, a task force commissioned by MDS revealed that only four scales are recommended to use for PD patients [169]: the Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS) [170], the PD-specific 16-item Parkinson Fatigue Scale (PFS-16) [153], the Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Fatigue Scale (FACIT-F) [171], and the Multidimensional Fatigue Inventory (MFI) [172].

The FSS includes physical and mental aspects of fatigue, was validated for PD populations, and is useful to screen and measure severity of fatigue [169, 173].

The PFS-16 is the first specific scale for measuring fatigue in PD. This scale evaluates only physical aspects of fatigue and has very good internal consistency and discriminant and convergent validity [174].

The FACIT-F was designed for assessing anemia-associated fatigue in oncological patients; it seems to be able to discriminate between fatigued and non-fatigued PD patients [173] and shows promise in PD as reported in a recent systematic review of measurement properties of self-report fatigue questionnaires [175].

The MFI was recently validated in PD and is reliable and valid to assess fatigue [176].

More recently, other questionnaires have been investigated. The Fatigue Impact Scale for Daily Use (D-FIS) [177] is a unidimensional scale of fatigue impact, and it was validated in PD; its psychometric properties were good: it showed adequate internal consistency and no floor and ceiling effect [178]. The Modified Fatigue Impact Scale (MFIS) was validated in PD patients without dementia: it showed high internal consistency, strong convergent validity, and adequate divergent validity [179].

In conclusion, although fatigue is a nonmotor symptom reducing quality of life in PD at several stages of disease, until now no multidimensional questionnaire was

validated in PD. Future studies should investigate specific aspects of fatigue in PD to allow the development of questionnaires that reflect both generic and PD-specific symptoms of fatigue.

PD Nonmotor-Associated Features

Several studies reported a relationship of fatigue with depression [158, 159, 180, 181], whereas others found high level of fatigue in nondepressed PD patients [161, 182]. Fatigue is associated with anxiety (both trait and state) [164, 183] and with sleep disorders [184]. However, some studies revealed that fatigue could not be attributable to excessive daytime sleepiness or poor sleep [164]. In a study, fatigue was related to cardiovascular sympathetic dysfunctions and with orthostatic hypotension [185]. The abovementioned associations might suggest that fatigue in PD is a nonmotor symptom. Finally fatigue was found to be associated with poor decision making evaluated by Iowa Gambling Task [186], with high level of apathy [182, 187] and to reduce quality of life in PD patients as evidenced in several studies [160, 182, 188]. More recently, fatigue was investigated in drug-naïve PD patient and was found to be associated with high level of depression and difficulties with activities of daily living (ADL) [189].

Management

Management of fatigue in PD is often complicated by the coexistence of several contributing factors like depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, and autonomic dysfunction; thus, the first treatment option should be identifying and possibly treating such symptoms.

In regard to medications with a specific action on fatigue in PD, most studies have evaluated the effect of dopaminergic drugs. Previous studies have suggested beneficial effect of levodopa and pergolide [190, 191]. More recently, methylphenidate, a dopamine transporter blocker, at a dose of 10 mg three times a day, has been found to be effective in improving fatigue in a randomized, placebo-controlled study ($N=36$) [192]. In addition, in a post hoc analysis of RECOVER study ($N=287$), Chaudhuri and collaborators [134] found significant improvement from baseline on the fatigue item of NMSS (“fatigue or lack of energy”) in the rotigotine group as compared with the placebo group, though such benefit was associated with improvement also on depression, apathy, and anhedonia not allowing to support a specific action of rotigotine on fatigue. Finally, a sub-study of ADAGIO ($N=1105$) has shown that rasagiline was associated with significantly less progression of fatigue compared with placebo over a 9-month period [193].

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