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Epidemiology of Parkinson's disease

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■ **Abstract** Epidemiological research aims to provide information on the development, prevalence and progression of diseases, and their associated risk factors. Epidemiological research is thus the basis of increasing our understanding on the aetiology of diseases and as a consequence the starting point

for identifying at risk groups in the population, development for novel prevention and treatment strategies, and health care planning. This review provides an overview of the epidemiology of Parkinson's disease, the second most common neurodegenerative disorder, with special emphasis on population-based data on the clinical progression of motor and non-motor features of the disease.

■ **Key words** Parkinson's disease · epidemiology · population-based · progression

Introduction

Parkinson's disease (PD) is the most common movement disorder besides essential tremor and the second most common neurodegenerative disease [156]. PD is neuropathologically characterized by nigrostriatal cell loss and presence of intracellular α -synuclein-positive inclusions called Lewy bodies. Originally understood as a dopamine-deficit disorder, increasing evidence suggests PD to be a multi-system brain disease in which various non-dopaminergic transmitter systems are affected at motor onset and become more prominent during the course of the disease [123]. Recently, Braak and coworkers proposed a staging procedure of PD pathology from stage 1 to 6 [19, 20]. This staging procedure suggests a premotor period in which typical pathological changes, Lewy neurites and Lewy bodies, spread from the olfactory bulb and vagus nerve to lower brainstem regions (medulla oblongata and pontine tegmentum) (stages 1 to 2), followed by a symptomatic period when patholog-

ical changes involve the midbrain including substantia nigra (stage 3), mesocortex (stage 4) and eventually neocortex (stages 5 to 6). Whether the premotor period in PD is long-lasting or begins in rather close temporal relation to the clinical onset is the subject of debate [63].

When PD becomes clinically overt, tremor, rigidity, bradykinesia, and postural instability are considered to be the cardinal signs of the disease. The course of the disease is chronic and progressive, and may be complicated by a wide range of motor and non-motor features, many of which contribute to increased disability as well as diminished quality of life in patients and caregivers [141]. However, there is a remarkable interindividual heterogeneity in the course of PD.

In this review, we provide an overview of current knowledge on epidemiological aspects of PD, with special focus on population-based data on the clinical progression of motor and non-motor features.

Diagnosis of PD in epidemiological research

A definite diagnosis of PD requires post-mortem confirmation. Although structural and functional neuroimaging may be useful in the differential diagnosis of PD and related disorders [137, 142] and is more or less frequently used in everyday practice, the diagnosis of PD in epidemiological research usually relies on clinical criteria which, at best, provide a diagnosis of probable PD. In many epidemiological studies, PD is diagnosed based on the *unequivocal* presence of at least two of the four motor cardinal signs and the absence of atypical features such as severe postural instability and frequent falls, autonomic, pyramidal or cerebellar features, eye movement disorders, or lack of response to dopaminergic treatment. Diagnosing PD and related disorders at a sufficient level of accuracy, however, may be a challenge, particularly during the early stages of the disease when there is no information on levodopa-responsiveness and atypical features may be absent or mild. Clinicopathological studies in selected patient cohorts with autopsy-proven diagnosis report the clinical diagnosis to be changed during life in more than 1/3 of those initially diagnosed with PD and in 60 % of subjects with other parkinsonian syndromes [68]. Therefore, more restrictive operationalized sets of diagnostic criteria have been developed. The most frequently used research criteria are those of the UK Parkinson's Disease Society Brain Bank (UKBB) [67] and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) [46]. When these criteria are applied by movement disorders specialists, about 90 % of cases are diagnosed correctly [68]. However, there is little information on reliability and validity of these criteria when applied early during the course of the disease and by general neurologists.

Differential diagnosis

Parkinsonian features may be subtle at the onset of the disease, and misdiagnosis is therefore not uncommon. In a community-based study, only 53 % of patients on antiparkinsonian drugs initiated by general practitioners due to suspected PD fulfilled UKBB criteria of probable PD when investigated by neurologists [104]. The most common misdiagnoses were essential tremor, vascular parkinsonism and Alzheimer's disease (AD). Clinical features that may help to distinguish PD from other parkinsonian disorders are asymmetry of motor symptoms, tremor at rest, and good/ excellent response to levodopa treatment [94]. However, none of these features definitively differentiates PD from other parkinsonian disorders. For example, asymmetry of motor features is typically seen in corticobasal degeneration, while "good" or "excellent" initial levodopa response was absent in about one of five patients with pathologically proven PD

[69]. Severe autonomic dysfunction, gaze palsy, and gait dysfunction at disease onset are uncommon and suggest atypical parkinsonian disorders like multiple system atrophy (MSA) or progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP). Lower body parkinsonism associated with gait apraxia is also frequently seen in vascular parkinsonism. According to current consensus criteria [103], a diagnosis of dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) should be provided in patients developing dementia within one year after motor onset, particularly in those with hallucinations, fluctuating attention, and other early clinical signs of visuospatial or executive dysfunction. Parkinsonian features also occur in a considerable portion of patients with Alzheimer's disease (AD) and other dementia disorders. For a more detailed overview see Table 1.

Prevalence and incidence of PD

Methodological differences between studies make direct comparison of prevalence and incidence estimates difficult. The disease is found in all ethnic groups, but with geographical differences in prevalence. Early onset of sporadic PD is rare, with about 4 % of patients developing clinical signs of the disease before an age of 50 years [164]. Approximately 1–2 % of the population over 65 years suffers from PD. This figure increases to 3 % to 5 % in people 85 years and older [33]. As PD is mainly an illness of later life, it is more common in developed countries where people live longer. Most community-based prevalence studies across Europe found crude prevalence rates between 100 and 200 per 100,000 inhabitants [168]. Incidence calculations are thought to be a more precise estimate of the frequency of the disease as they

Table 1 Differential diagnosis in parkinsonian disorders

Type of parkinsonism	Subtype/cause
Parkinson's disease ^a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Idiopathic ● Familial
Symptomatic parkinsonism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drug-induced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Neuroleptics, antidepressants, lithium ○ Antiemetics ○ Antihypertensive agents, antiarrhythmics ● Vascular disease ● Intoxication (MPTP, rotenone, others) ● Traumatic ● Post-infectious ● Neoplasm ● Normal pressure hydrocephalus
Parkinsonism due to other neurodegenerative disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Atypical parkinsonism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multiple system atrophy (MSA)^a ○ Progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP)^b ○ Corticobasal degeneration (CBD)^b ● Dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB)^a ● Alzheimer's disease^b ● Others

^a synucleinopathy; ^b tauopathy

are not influenced by mortality. However, there are substantial variations in reported incidence rates, most probably due to methodological differences between studies, in particular differences in case ascertainment and use of diagnostic criteria. Age-standardized incidence rates of PD in population-based studies in European countries and the USA range from 8.6 to 19.0 per 100,000 inhabitants when strict diagnostic criteria of PD are applied [161]. As may be anticipated, door-to-door surveys and studies using broader inclusion criteria have yielded higher prevalence and incidence figures [161, 168].

Risk factors for developing PD

The etiology of PD remains unclear in the majority of cases. Current theories suggest a combination of age, genetic and non-genetic factors to be involved in PD etiology [4].

■ Genetic risk factors

Family members of affected patients are at 3- to 4-fold increased risk to develop the disease compared to subjects in the general population or controls [11, 85]. Due to this aggregation of PD within families and pedigrees, a genetic cause of the disease has been hypothesized for several decades. During the last decade, several gene loci were found to be associated with autosomal-dominantly [45, 89, 121, 173] or recessively [81, 163, 165] inherited parkinsonism. Most of the so far known gene mutations cause juvenile or early onset of the disease, while others such as the most recently identified *leucine-rich repeat kinase 2 (LRRK2)* mutations appear to cause parkinsonism resembling sporadic PD with respect to both clinical and demographical features [57, 182]. The discovery of these genetic mutations and the increased understanding of dysfunction of their aberrantly encoded proteins have provided important and novel insights into the molecular pathogenesis of the disease. There is now compelling evidence that impairment of the ubiquitin-proteasome system, mitochondrial dysfunction and decreased oxidative stress tolerance are key pathologic mechanisms in PD pathogenesis [32, 41]. However, the exact mechanisms are not completely understood [118], and monogenetic causes only account for a small proportion (<10%) of all PD cases, while the vast majority of PD cases appear to be sporadic. In these, occupational, lifestyle and environmental factors, possibly in interaction with each other or with susceptibility genes, may play a part.

■ Non-genetic risk factors

A large variety of putative environmental, occupational and life-style risk factors for PD have been investigated during recent decades. For many risk factors, studies have shown inconsistent or contradictory results [31, 86]. Results from these studies have to be interpreted in the light of several kinds of potential bias, particularly recall bias in retrospective studies, but also reversed causality, as there is uncertainty regarding the duration of the pre-motor period in which the underlying disease process has already started but not become clinically overt. Most consistently, exposure to pesticides and cigarette smoking has been linked to a higher and lower risk, respectively, for developing PD. For more detailed reviews of this topic see [31, 86].

■ Gender and PD risk

Gender differences in the risk of developing PD have been described in numerous studies, most of them reporting higher incidence rates in males, particularly in the oldest age groups [157]. Several studies found no differences in incidence of PD between men and women aged less than 60 years at onset. Neuroprotective properties of female steroid hormones, or alternatively gender differences in exposure to environmental and occupational risk factors or gender-specific genetic influences have been discussed as possible underlying causes [144, 157]. In a recent meta-analysis of 17 incidence studies [157], the overall age-adjusted male to female (M:F) ratio for incident PD was 1.46. However, gender differences in incidence of PD appear to differ by ethnicity. Among 14 studies conducted in Western populations, the M:F ratio was 1.58 and only two studies found a M:F ratio of lower than 1, while in Asian populations gender distribution was almost equal (M:F ratio 0.95).

■ Premotor features

Non-motor features found to be associated with higher risk of PD in the general population, frequently suggested to be premotor symptoms of the disease, include constipation, olfactory dysfunction, depression/anxiety and REM sleep behavior disorder (RBD). These are more thoroughly discussed by others [160] and in part below.

Progression of motor symptoms and disability

Due to lack of in vivo biomarkers and the current limitations of functional neuroimaging methods as surrogate markers of disease progression in PD [109], clinical

assessment using established clinical rating scales remains the gold standard in charting the course of the disease.

■ Rating scales

Various clinical instruments have been used for evaluation of motor severity and disability in patients with PD, although many of them have not been sufficiently evaluated for reliability and validity [129]. The most widely used and accepted rating tool in PD is the Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale (UPDRS), which was introduced in 1987 by an international group of movement disorders specialists [34]. The UPDRS was designed to follow the longitudinal course of the disease and has been shown to be both reliable and valid [129]. It is divided into four parts (subscales), covering symptoms of mentation, behavior, and mood in part I, activities of daily living in part II, motor symptoms in part III, and complications of therapy in part IV. Each item in part I and III is quantitatively scored on a 5-point scale (from 0 to 4). Despite its strengths, the UPDRS is currently under revision to adapt it to recent scientific advances, particularly to better capture the wide spectrum of non-motor problems experienced by patients with PD. The Hoehn and Yahr scale was devised in 1967 and is the other main scale used in PD [64]. It measures the stage of the disease by including both impairment and disability of movements, balance, and gait. The scale is allocating stages from 0 (no signs of disease) to 5 (wheelchair bound or bedridden unless assisted). Non-motor features are, however, not captured by the Hoehn and Yahr scale.

■ Cardinal signs

Tremor at rest (4–6 Hz frequency) is the most common cardinal sign at motor onset [70, 75, 139]. However, 25% of patients with PD never develop tremor [70]. Rest tremor in PD is usually a supination-pronation tremor, asymmetric, and most prominent in the distal part of an extremity, lost during sleep, reduced in action, and worsened by excitement, anxiety, or apprehension. *Bradykinesia*, referring to slowness of movements with difficulties in initiating and maintaining motions, and *rigidity*, characterized by increased resistance to passive stretch of skeletal muscles, are less common than rest tremor but are still frequently seen at onset of PD.

Axial symptoms, including postural instability and impairment of speech, are not typical at disease onset, but become a common complication of advanced PD. In a community-based study of 128 patients with PD, 64% had postural instability with falls and 49% had speech difficulties at an average of six years of disease duration. Only 1% of these patients reported unsteadiness as their

initial symptom [138]. In a prospective population-based longitudinal study of patients who were non-demented at baseline, the proportion of patients with predominant postural instability and gait difficulties (PIGD) increased from 53.8% to 88.1% during 8 years of follow-up [8]. Prospective clinic-based studies of falls in PD found that nearly 70% of patients with PD fall at least once each year [54]. In a prospective long-term study, 81% of patients had fallen due to the disease after 15 years of follow-up [60]. Similar to this, a retrospective study of 474 patients with pathologically proven PD reported that 73.3% had fallen during the course of the disease, 16.9% had suffered bone fractures, and the average time from onset to the first fall was 9 years [171]. In this study, female gender, older age, symmetrical onset and autonomic dysfunction each independently predicted earlier falls. In a meta-analysis of prospective studies of falling in PD, the strongest predictor of falling was prior falls in the preceding year, while disease severity itself was a poor predictor of falls [124].

In the very majority of patients with PD, the initial motor symptoms are localized to the upper extremities [162], spread to the other ipsilateral limb within one to three years, and affect the contralateral limbs in three to eight years [126]. The asymmetrical pattern, however, usually persists during the course of the disease, even in advanced stages [71]. Severity of bradykinesia, rigidity, and gait and balance progress similarly, while tremor severity appears to be rather stable over time, possibly indicating different underlying pathophysiological processes [97].

■ Freezing of gait

Freezing of gait (FOG) is a gait disorder in which patients are unable to initiate or continue locomotion and is an important source of falls [149]. FOG describes the patients' difficulty to move their feet and may become apparent as start hesitation, turn hesitation, destination hesitation, or halting when walking. FOG often occurs suddenly, may be triggered by visual stimuli like narrow spaces and doors, is usually transient, and predominantly appears in off-state. Frequency and severity of FOG increases with the progression of PD. Severe FOG in the early stage are atypical for PD and suggests other diagnoses such as pure freezing syndrome or PSP. In the DATATOP trial, 7% of patients with mild PD reported FOG before treatment was initiated [47]. 26% of patients experienced FOG at the end of the study [47]. Baseline risk factors for development of FOG in this study were absence of tremor and longer disease duration. The pathophysiological basis of this phenomenon is poorly understood, but a strong association with development of axial symptoms may indicate common underlying pathology [47].

■ Rate of functional decline

Although the nature of PD is usually described as slowly progressive, rather few prospective studies have provided estimates on the rate of functional decline in PD using currently acknowledged clinical rating scales, such as the UPDRS and the Hoehn and Yahr scale. Drug trials including placebo arms provide information on the natural progression of motor symptoms in patients with early disease, estimating the rate of progression in drug-naïve PD patients to be 3.6 to 13.4 points per year, as measured by the UPDRS motor score [1, 158]. Similar progression rates have been found in neuroimaging studies, reporting progressive degeneration in the striatum of 4% to 13% per year in PD [63, 110]. The rate of motor decline is less rapid in drug-treated patients. Two population-based longitudinal cohort studies found annual progression rates in the UPDRS motor score of 1.5% and 3.1% of the maximum score [10, 97]. Similar rates were reported from another community-based sample using self-administered Hoehn and Yahr scales to assess disease progression [140]. Several studies in early PD suggest that on average five years after initiation of drug therapy severity of motor impairment and disability have returned to levels found before treatment was started [44, 82].

Information on the natural long-term disease progression in PD comes from studies conducted in the pre-levodopa era, but is limited. In a study by Mjølnes, 40% of patients developed impairment of work ability within the first four years of disease duration [107]. Hoehn and Yahr, in their classic article, reported that 37% of patients with PD had reached stage III or above within four years of disease duration, while 34% of those with a disease duration for ten years or more still were in stage I or II [65]. More recent studies suggest that the rate of functional decline is similar in treated patients. Müller et al. studied retrospectively the progression of Hoehn and Yahr stages in a selected cohort of patients with pathologically confirmed PD and found no patient with progression to Hoehn and Yahr stage III within the first year of motor onset [112]. In the same study, median duration from debut to Hoehn and Yahr stage II and III was 3 years and 5.5 years, respectively, similar to the results published by Hoehn and Yahr. In a prospective long-term study following treated PD patients for 15 years, the average Hoehn and Yahr stage was 3.8 in on-state and 4.1 in off-state [60]. In this study, the authors also compared data on the Hoehn and Yahr staging in their patients with those from the pre-levodopa study by Hoehn and Yahr and found no differences in long-term results. They concluded that modern treatment does not lead to significant long-term benefit in patients with PD.

There is a remarkable interindividual variation in the progression of PD, which has resulted in numerous studies investigating predictors of more or less rapid func-

tional decline in PD. During recent years, three reviews have attempted to summarize evidence on predictors of functional decline in PD [102, 128, 150]. Methodological weaknesses were observed in most studies, leading to limited or inconsistent results on several potential risk factors of functional decline. Evidence from prospective long-term studies suggests that higher age at motor onset is the major denominator of more rapid motor progression in PD [10, 59]. In one of these studies [10], the annual increase in UPDRS motor score was shown to be about 1.5 times more rapid in patients aged 70 years at motor onset compared to subjects aged 50 years at onset. The predicted time for progressing one Hoehn and Yahr stage for patients aged 70 years and 50 years at motor onset was 5.1 years and 9.3 years, respectively. Less consistently identified risk factors for more rapid functional decline in PD were a PIGD motor subtype, lack of rest tremor, more severe functional impairment, and cognitive dysfunction [102, 128, 150]. Whether the duration of the disease has impact on functional decline is a matter of debate, some studies suggesting a non-linear progression of motor symptoms with more rapid decline during the early stages of the disease [140]. Interestingly, several features discussed to influence the risk for developing PD, such as cigarette smoking, coffee and tea consumption, and pesticide exposure appear not to impact the rate of motor progression in overt PD [7, 53, 77].

Motor complications

The course of PD is frequently complicated by variations in motor response. Motor complications comprise dyskinesias, which are episodes of abnormal involuntary movements involving head, trunk, and limbs, and motor fluctuations, describing a transient decline in motor performance. The presence and development of dyskinesias and motor fluctuations are associated with each other [58] and both features increase in frequency and severity with the duration of the disease [13].

In clinic-based studies, approximately 40% of patients developed motor problems within four to six years after disease onset [3]. In a long-term study, dyskinesias and “end of dose failure” had been experienced by about 95% of subjects at 17 years of disease duration [60]. However, these may be overestimates of the frequency of motor complications due to selection bias. Population-based studies found lower prevalence rates of motor complications in PD [87, 138]. In a community-based study, 78% of the patients did not experience motor fluctuations after more than 6 years of levodopa treatment [87]. In another population-based study from England, 28% of levodopa-treated patients suffered from dyskinesias and 40% from response fluctuations after about seven years of disease duration [138]. The risk of

developing motor complications has been attributed to younger age of onset, increased disease severity, and higher daily levodopa dose [13].

Progression of non-motor symptoms

The vast majority of patients with PD will experience non-motor problems during the course of their disease. In a cross-sectional clinic-based study of 99 patients with PD, only 12% had no non-motor problems after seven years of disease duration [145]. Sleep disturbances, autonomic dysfunction, olfactory deficits, sensory complaints, and in particular a wide range of neuropsychiatric problems including cognitive impairment may lead to substantially reduced functioning and quality of life [141].

■ Cognitive impairment and dementia

Cognitive impairment may be present even in the early stages of PD. In a community-based survey in early PD, 36% of the patients had evidence of cognitive impairment at diagnosis [39]. At a mean of 3.5 years from diagnosis, 10% of patients had developed dementia and further 57% showed evidence of cognitive impairment [170]. This is in line with findings in a community-based prevalence study in which more than half of non-demented patients had some form of cognitive impairment [76]. The cognitive profile in patients with the disease varies somewhat, but executive impairment, including working memory and attention shift, and visuospatial dysfunction characterize early cognitive impairment in PD [29].

The cognitive impairment in patients with PD is progressive. The mean annual decline on the MMSE in a population-based prevalence sample of 129 patients with PD was found to be one point [177]. However, while the change in score for non-demented patients was small, patients with dementia declined with 2.4 points per year [177]. With advance in PD, there is an increase in the severity and range of cognitive deficits, probably reflecting the involvement of cortical structures. Performance on tests of orientation and attention best differentiate dementia associated with PD (PDD) from AD [18]. In community-based studies using standardized cognitive assessment and Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)-IIIR criteria, prevalence rates of dementia range from 18% to 41% [132]. However, as dementia is associated with increased mortality [92], cross-sectional studies are likely to underestimate the true frequency of PDD. Prospective follow-up of an Australian cohort revealed that 17 years after disease onset, only 15% of surviving subjects were not cognitively impaired [60]. In a prospective population-

based survey of 224 patients with PD, the cumulative prevalence of dementia after 17 years of disease duration was 78% [175]. The risk for developing dementia is up to 6-fold higher in PD than in non-PD subjects [176], and about 10% of patients with PD develop dementia per year [99, 176]. The cumulative incidence of dementia steadily increases with age and duration of PD and, conditional on survival, increases to 80% to 90% by age 90 years [22]. Overall, about 3–4% of patients with dementia have PDD [169].

Prospective studies indicate that advanced age rather than higher age at onset is a risk factor for PDD [72, 90, 175, 178]. Other factors that are independently associated with increased risk for incident dementia in PD are mild cognitive impairment and severity of parkinsonism, particularly axial symptoms like postural instability and speech problems [8, 72, 90, 91, 175]. During 8-year prospective follow-up of a community-based prevalence sample of non-demented patients with PD, development of PIGD parkinsonism was strongly associated with more rapid cognitive decline and an about 50% risk for dementia within the following 4 years [8]. This figure corresponds well to that of another longitudinal study, reporting that 25% of subjects with a PIGD motor subtype developed dementia over two years [21]. In both studies, none with tremor-dominant PD were demented.

■ Other neurobehavioral disturbances

Neuropsychiatric problems are common in PD. In a population-based study of 139 patients with PD, 61% suffered from at least one neuropsychiatric symptom after 12 years of disease duration [180]. Of importance, charting the frequency of cognitive impairment, dementia, and fatigue was not part of this investigation. The most common behaviors found were depression (38%) and hallucinations (27%).

Psychotic symptoms in PD (PDPsy) include illusions, the sense of presence, simple and complex hallucinations with and without insight, and delusions. Visual hallucinations are found to be the most common form, while auditory, olfactory and tactile hallucinations are less frequent and usually present together with visual hallucinations [27, 37, 52]. Provisional diagnostic criteria for PDPsy have recently been published [130]. PDPsy in patients with PD rarely occurred before the introduction of dopaminergic treatment [36, 73]. Dopaminergic agents are therefore understood as an important cause to psychotic symptoms and abnormal behavior in PD. However, in several prospective studies no association between hallucinations and dosages of dopaminergic agents or treatment duration was found [66, 179]. In contrast, other factors such as advancing age, disease duration and severity, sleep and visual disorders, and most

consistently cognitive impairment were identified as risk factors for hallucinations in patients with PD [35, 73]. Due to the latter observation, a current theory is that hallucinations are due to a combination of dopaminergic (over-)stimulation and more widespread cerebral involvement [35]. Thus, an increase in frequency is expected as the disease progresses. Reported prevalence rates of hallucinations vary, most likely due to differences in patient selection and study design, and range from 16% to 75% in prospective cross-sectional studies [73]. In a population-based study from England, 18.5% of 124 patients with PD suffered from hallucinations after 6 years of disease duration [138], compared to 26.6% of patients with a mean disease duration of 12 years in a Norwegian cohort [179]. Longitudinal studies of hallucinations in PD are rare. In a prospective clinic-based survey of 89 PD patients with a mean disease duration of about 10 years at baseline, hallucinations were progressive and persistent, affecting 33% at study entry and 63% of patients four years later [52]. Hallucinations are one of the main features causing hospitalization and nursing home placement in patients with PD [181].

Depressive symptoms are significantly more common in PD than in age-matched controls and patients with other chronic diseases [114, 154]. Depressive symptoms may occur many years before the motor onset of PD [143]. About 20% of patients report depressive symptoms before diagnosis, and the risk for developing PD is 2–3 fold increased in depressed patients compared to non-depressed control subjects [88, 114, 115]. In a recent systematic review of prevalence studies of depression in PD, frequency rates ranged from 12.7% to about 90% in clinic-based studies and from 2.7% to 35% in population-based surveys fulfilling quality criteria for inclusion [131]. This variation is likely to be the result of methodological differences between studies in the studies included. The weighted prevalence of major depression, minor depression and dysthymia was 17%, 22% and 13%, respectively [131]. Thus, in the majority of patients depressive symptoms are of mild to moderate severity. In those with dementia, however, the portion of patients suffering from major depression is substantially higher [155]. Despite the high frequency of depressive symptoms in PD, suicide is not more common in patients with the disease compared to the general population [113, 148]. The association between depression and various disease-related features have been studied over the years. Disability, disease severity, axial involvement, cognitive impairment and left hemisphere involvement were found to correlate with depression in PD in the majority of studies, while results were more inconsistent regarding age at onset, female gender and previous depressive episodes [167].

Apathy is commonly used to refer to a state of diminished motivation and is characterized by simultaneous reduction in goal-directed motor, emotional and cogni-

tive activity, such as lack of initiative and effort to perform everyday activities, flattening of affect or lack of emotional responses, and lack of intellectual interest and initiative regarding personal, social, or occupational issues [100]. Symptoms of apathy may overlap with those of depression, but there is evidence that these conditions are separable from each other [74, 93]. There is a lack of longitudinal studies of apathy in PD, and thus there is an uncertainty whether and how characteristics of apathy may change over time. Observed frequency rates of apathy vary substantially, ranging from 17% to 70% [174]. This variation has been attributed to use of different rating scales of apathy, different cut-off values, and other methodological differences [174]. In the so far largest and only population-based study of apathy in PD, 16.5% were diagnosed with apathy after 12.6 years of disease duration [180]. In several cross-sectional studies apathy severity/frequency correlated with cognitive impairment and dementia, and in particular executive dysfunction [74, 93, 125]. Thus, in those with advanced PD higher prevalence rates of apathy are expected compared to patients with early disease.

Fatigue is a subjective experience that can be defined as an overwhelming sense of tiredness, lack of energy, or feeling of exhaustion. It is frequently seen in the general population, both in developing and developed countries [122], but is significantly more prominent in several neurologic, psychiatric and systemic diseases [23, 24]. Fatigue in PD may occur as a physical or mental problem, and both dimensions of fatigue are more prominent in PD compared to age-matched control, but are not correlated with each other [96]. As with other non-motor symptoms, fatigue may also precede the onset of the disease. In their original article, Hoehn and Yahr listed generalized fatigue as the presenting symptom in 2% of patients with PD [64]. In patients with more advanced disease, cross-sectional studies found prevalence rates between 40% and 56%, and the frequency of fatigue was found to be even higher (75%) during off-state [172]. In the only population-based longitudinal study to date, fatigue prevalence increased from 35.7% to 55.7% during eight years of follow-up [9]. This increase was related to disease progression, depression and excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS). However, in patients without depression and EDS more than 1/3 of subjects still complained about fatigue, indicating that fatigue in PD may occur independently from other non-motor problems with possible overlapping symptomatology. In more than half of patients, fatigue was a persistent feature when once experienced [9]. Fatigue has substantial negative impact on cognitive and physical function, and quality of life in patients with the disease [42, 61].

■ Sleep disorders

During the last decade, scientific research has resulted in increased understanding of sleep/wake regulation [136]. It is now clear that several brainstem nuclei and their communicating pathways in the ascending arousing system through the hypothalamus and thalamus to the cortex play key roles in sleep disorders [98, 136]. As Lewy bodies and cell loss are found in these areas in PD, it is anticipated that disturbances of sleep and alertness, including *insomnia*, *hypersomnia*, and *parasomnias*, may be experienced by a large number of patients with PD and other α -synucleinopathies, such as MSA [14]. In addition to pathological changes in brain areas crucial for regulation of sleep and wakefulness, other conditions may contribute to sleep disorders in patients with PD, such as depression and drug treatment. Dopaminergic drugs, particularly dopamine agonists, have been linked to different sleep complaints including insomnia, EDS, and sudden sleep attacks [119, 135].

Insomnia is the most common sleeping problem in PD. In a population-based prevalence study, 60% of patients complained about nocturnal sleeping problems after an average nine years of disease duration [153]. In most of them, sleep fragmentation and early awakening were the major problems. In the same population, these sleeping problems were found to be one of the main contributors to reduced quality of life [78]. A longitudinal study of this cohort revealed similar prevalence rates of insomnia during 8 years of prospective follow-up, but considerable variation in individual patients over time. The presence of insomnia in this longitudinal study was associated with disease duration, depressive symptoms and female gender [50].

EDS is also common in PD [2]. Evidence suggests that daytime somnolence in PD is not a consequence of nocturnal sleeping problems [48, 51]. Clinical EDS has been found in 15% of PD patients in a population-based cohort with mean disease duration of nine years, compared to only 1% of EDS in healthy elderly control subjects [51]. Two longitudinal studies of the same population reported an increase of occurrence of EDS to 29% and 41% of surviving patients after 4 years and 8 years of follow-up, respectively [48, 51]. EDS was reported as a persistent complaint in the majority of patients and was associated with age, gender, use of dopamine agonists, and disease severity, suggesting multifactorial underlying pathophysiology [48, 51].

REM sleep behavior disorder (RBD) is a parasomnia characterized by prominent motor activity due to loss of the normal skeletal muscle atonia during REM sleep. The clinical main features of RBD are vocalizations and movements of limbs and body, often associated with dreams. They can vary in intensity and duration, potentially leading to injuries of the patients or their bedpartners [26]. Patients with idiopathic RBD have re-

cently been shown to be at increased risk to develop PD and other α -synucleinopathies, and thus RBD may be an early sign of an evolving synucleinopathy [15]. It is particularly common in patients with MSA and DLB [15], and up to one-third of patients with PD are affected [26, 40]. In a population-based prevalence study of PD with 8-year longitudinal follow-up, prevalence of clinically probable RBD varied with time, affecting 14.6–27% of subjects, and was independently associated with male gender, lower disease severity and higher daily levodopa equivalent doses [49].

The syndromes of *restless legs (RLS)* and *periodic limb movements during sleep (PLMS)* are sleep related features that are associated with each other [25, 108] and common in the elderly in Western populations, in which RLS affects 8 to 10% of subjects over 65 years of age [6, 134, 159]. Substantially lower prevalence rates of RLS have been found in Asian populations (0.1–1.0%) [106, 152]. Non-controlled studies of RLS in PD from Europe and Northern and Southern America found RLS to be present in about 20 to 50% [17, 120]. Controlled studies conducted in Asian populations using currently acknowledged criteria suggest that RLS may be slightly more common in PD. In a case control study from India, 7.9% of PD patients at five years of disease duration complained about RLS compared to only 0.8% of control subjects [84]. In a more recent study from Singapore, 3.0% of patients with PD vs. 0.5% of controls had RLS [95]. To the best of our knowledge, longitudinal studies of RLS in population-based cohorts with PD have not been conducted. RLS in PD usually develops after motor onset of PD and is suggested to be milder than in subjects with idiopathic RLS [116]. Lower plasma ferritin concentrations were found to correlate with the occurrence of RLS in the largest study conducted to date [120], but not in others surveys [84, 116]. Disturbances in central dopaminergic systems are thought to be involved in the etiology of RLS in PD [43, 151].

■ Autonomic disturbances

Although autonomic dysfunction, particularly orthostatic hypotension, is generally accepted to be a clinical marker of atypical parkinsonian disorders such as MSA, increasing evidence suggests that it is a frequent characteristic also in patients with PD. A recent study of *de novo* patients with PD found decreased cardiac radioiodinated metaiodobenzylguanidine (MIBG) uptake, indicating that latent sympathetic nervous dysfunction is already present in patients with early, untreated PD [117]. In the same study, MIBG uptake and blood pressure responses decreased with increased disease severity, suggesting that vasomotor cardiac dysfunction is associated with the severity of the disease. This is in line with clinical observations of an increase in autonomic

disturbances as the disease progresses. Symptomatic hypotension is rare in early PD. In a prospective clinic-based study of 51 de novo patients with PD, only one subject showed clinical symptoms of hypotension [16]. In contrast, in a community-based study of prevalent PD patients, 47% met criteria of orthostatic hypotension [5]. This figure was lower in a prospective clinic-based survey of patients with six years of disease duration and more advanced disease, in which 15.4% of subjects complained about symptomatic orthostatic hypotension [83]. Other frequently experienced autonomic symptoms in this cohort were hypersalivation (14%), sexual dysfunction (18%), urinary problems (22%), sweating disorder (24%) and constipation (59%). In a more recent clinic-based case-control study of patient-reported autonomic features, patients with PD reported significantly more symptoms for all autonomic domains, with the greatest differences to controls in the gastrointestinal and urinary domain [166]. Greater disease severity, higher doses of dopaminergic medication, and advanced age were associated with more frequent autonomic symptoms in this cohort.

■ Olfactory dysfunction

Olfactory dysfunction in PD includes impairment of odor detection, differentiation, and identification, and is persistent and not influenced by drug treatment [79]. In the light of Braak's hypothesis of a stagewise progression of pathological changes in PD, indicating presymptomatic lesions in the olfactory tract, attention has been drawn to patients primarily diagnosed with idiopathic hyposmia. Recent evidence suggests that these persons are at increased risk of developing PD later during life [55, 127, 133]. Of 40 hyposmic, asymptomatic first-degree relatives of PD patients, 10% developed clinical PD within two years of prospective follow-up [127]. In addition, baseline 123β-CIT SPECT binding ratios of these patients were strongly reduced, indicating a subclinical degenerative process within the dopaminergic nigrostriatal system. In another study [146], 11 of 30 patients with idiopathic olfactory loss exhibited an increased echogenicity of the substantia nigra in transcranial sonography. In 10 of these 11 patients, dopamine transporter SPECT scans were performed. Median uptake ratios in the basal ganglia were pathological in five patients and two further subjects exhibited borderline findings. After four years, 7% of the 30 subjects had developed clinical symptoms of PD [55].

Olfactory dysfunction is increasingly recognized as a frequent feature in overt PD [105, 111], but its prevalence in the general PD population is unknown. Most patients showing deficits in olfactory tests are unaware of a smell disorder [28, 111]. In a clinic-based study, 38% of 37 PD subjects reported subjectively normal olfaction at six

years of disease duration [111]. However, based on olfactory testing, all 37 subjects had at least moderate hyposmia and about 50% had anosmia [111].

Prognosis and socioeconomic consequences of PD

PD is chronic and progressive, and currently incurable. Life expectancy is decreased despite modern treatment. In their classic article, Hoehn and Yahr reported a standardized mortality ratio (SMR) of 2.9 [64]. SMR derived from more recent studies range from 1.3 to 4.1 [62, 101]. Methodological differences are likely to account for this variation. In the Olmstead County study, median survival of patients from diagnosis was 10.3 years [30]. In the Sydney Multicentre Study following de novo patients prospectively over time, median time from motor onset to death was 12.2 years [60]. Disease severity, dementia and, with some inconsistency, age are independent risk factors for increased mortality in PD [62, 101]. The cause of death in patients with PD are often related to immobility, and fatal infections are not unusual [12].

Several studies from Western and Northern European countries suggest that the disease is costly for patients and the society [38, 56, 80, 147]. In a Swedish survey the total annual cost of the disease was estimated to be 13,800 Euros per individual [56]. Due to the progressive nature of PD, costs increase with disease severity. Direct annual costs were estimated to be nearly 30,000 Euros for those in Hoehn and Yahr stage V, and nursing home placement was associated with a cost increase of approximately 500% in English patients [38]. Due to the aging population, the economic burden of PD is expected to further increase in the future.

Conclusion

PD is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder. PD is chronic and progressive, and mortality is increased despite modern treatment. Due to lack of valid diagnostic biomarkers, the diagnosis of PD during lifetime relies on clinical criteria. Age-standardized incidence rates of PD in population-based studies from Europe and the USA using strict diagnostic criteria range from 8.6 to 19 per 100,000 inhabitants. The disease cause is considered to be multifactorial, with interplay between environmental factors and genetic susceptibility, and aging-related processes. Non-motor features such as constipation, olfactory dysfunction, depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders may precede the motor onset of the disease which is defined by the presence of at least two of the four cardinal motor signs resting tremor, rigidity, bradykinesia, and postural abnormalities. Overall motor severity progresses slowly, with annual progression rates ranging from 1.5–3% in population-based studies.

After about six years of disease duration, 22–40 % of patients in community-based samples have developed motor fluctuations. In general, the frequency and severity of non-motor features increases during the clinical course of the disease. In advanced stages, the vast majority of patients have experienced non-motor problems such as hypersomnia, apathy, fatigue, psychotic symptoms, cognitive impairment, or dementia. Prevalence figures of these features, however, vary considerably, most probably due to methodological differences between studies. In addition, there is a lack of population-based longitudinal studies on several PD related features, such as motor complications, psychosis, apathy, and autonomic dysfunction.

Future needs in PD epidemiology include (i) a better characterization of the premotor phase with respect to its duration and associated features, (ii) validation of accuracy of established diagnostic criteria when applied early during the course of the disease, (iii) development and validation of disease-specific diagnostic criteria for non-motor features, and (iv) prospective long-term studies of representative incident cohorts with careful assessment of motor and non-motor features.

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