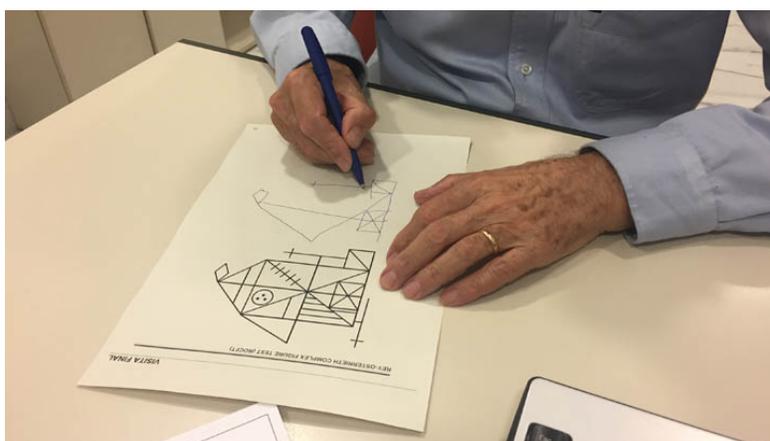


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The importance of cognitive and behavioural assessment in Parkinson's disease



Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects the central nervous system, which causes the appearance of motor and non-motor symptoms. This article highlights the importance of non-motor symptoms (cognitive and behavioral alterations) assessment since it will translate into better patient follow-up and treatment of this disease.

Patient with Parkinson's disease during the cognitive assessment process.

Parkinson's disease has been historically characterized as a motor disease involving resting tremor, postural instability and bradykinesia. However, it is presently undeniable that cognitive and behavioural alterations are also inherent to Parkinson's disease.

At time of diagnosis, up to 30% of patients exhibit mild cognitive impairment enough severe as to interfere with activities of daily living. However, after a 5 year follow-up, up to 35% of patients will develop dementia (a prevalence that will increase up to 80% in 20-years long-term survivals). In parallel, behavioural complications such as depression, anxiety, apathy, visual hallucinations, addictions or impulse control disorders may affect an important proportion of patients at any point along disease progression.

For this reason, defining, standardizing and disseminating cognitive, functional and behavioral assessment procedures specific to this disease is an obvious need that translates directly into better patient follow-up and treatment while also impacting positively on Parkinson's research.

The Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders research group at the Biomedical Research Institute of the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau have dedicated important efforts on the development and validation of instruments for cognitive, functional and behavioural assessment in Parkinson's disease. Moreover, the research group has been intimately involved in the development of the diagnostic criteria for mild cognitive impairment in Parkinson's disease and developed as well multiple projects aimed to better understand the brain mechanisms participating in the development of all these non-motor features.

In a recent article published in "Expert Review of Neurotherapeutics", the authors review the concept and diagnostic criteria of mild cognitive impairment and dementia in Parkinson's disease and the recommended instruments and procedures for cognitive, functional and behavioural assessment in this population.

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