Stowell Associates
October, 2017 Caregiver Self-Study

IN THIS SELF-STUDY THE READER WILL LEARN:

- The signs and symptoms of Parkinson’s disease
- The risk factors associated with Parkinson’s disease
- Treatment options for people with Parkinson’s disease
- Where to get more information on Parkinson’s disease
SIGN S AND SYMPTOMS OF PARKINSON’S DISEASE

Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurological disorder that affects a person’s movement. According to the Mayo Clinic, signs and symptoms may include tremor (shaking); slowed movement; muscle stiffness; decreased ability to perform unconscious movements (such as blinking, smiling or swinging one’s arms when walking); impaired posture and balance; speech changes; and writing changes (it may become more difficult to write and one’s writing may appear small).

Parkinson’s disease can also be accompanied by thinking difficulties, depression, emotional changes, swallowing problems, sleep problems/disorders, bladder problems (inability to urinate or control urine), blood pressure changes, problems with the sense of smell, fatigue, pain and sexual dysfunction. These additional problems may be treatable.

RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH PARKINSON’S DISEASE

Risk factors include getting older (the disease usually manifests at age 60 or older), a family history of Parkinson’s disease, gender (men are at higher risk) and ongoing exposure to herbicides and pesticides. Sometimes, however, younger people are diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease. According to The American Parkinson Disease Organization, “the rate of the disease’s progression is usually much slower in younger than older people, due in part to the fact that younger people have fewer general health problems and are more capable during physical therapy treatment.”

TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR PARKINSON’S DISEASE

There is no cure for Parkinson’s disease. There are some medications, however, which can provider substantial relief for people who have the disease. Usually people are given a combination of the medications levodopa and carbidopa. Drugs which act like dopamine (a neurotransmitter in the brain) can help, as can amantadine (an antiviral drug), rasagiline (a drug which slows the breakdown of dopamine and other brain chemicals) and safinamide tablets (approved this year by the FDA to be used with carbidopa/levodopa).

Physicians will sometimes perform a surgical procedure called deep brain stimulation. This involves implanting electrodes into parts of a person’s brain which are connected to a generator implanted in the person’s chest. The generator sends electrical pulses to the brain and can help reduce symptoms. This is usually done for people who have advance Parkinson’s disease who have had unstable responses to levodopa (one of the medications discussed above). Physical therapy can also improve function and relieve pain.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

The following websites have a lot more information on Parkinson's disease:
http://www.pdf.org/about_pdf?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI67av5PiB1qlVEeEbCh29Iqk2EAAYAiAAEqJbs_D_BwE
http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/parkinsons-disease/basics/definition/con-20028488
https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/All-Disorders/Parkinsons-Disease-Information-Page


Post Test for Parkinson’s Disease
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Please complete the following test and return to Stowell Associates by 11/30/17.

You may also submit your answers online. Type in your name and date and choose the correct answers. Then save the form to your computer and attach it in an email to: Romerom@caremanagedhomecare.com.

Name: ________________________________ Date __________________________

1. Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurological disorder that affects a person’s movement.
   □ a. True
   □ b. False

2. People with Parkinson’s disease often experience:
   □ a. Muscle stiffness
   □ b. Tremors (shaking)
   □ c. Writing changes
   □ d. All of the above

3. Parkinson’s disease usually manifests itself at age 60 or older.
   □ a. True
   □ b. False

4. There is no cure for Parkinson’s disease.
   □ a. True
   □ b. False

5. There are medications which can provide substantial relief for people who have Parkinson’s disease.
   □ a. True
   □ b. False

6. The websites listed on page two contain a lot of information on Parkinson’s disease.
   □ a. True
   □ b. False