



THE TRANSMITTER

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Article Reviews

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Cannabis Use in Parkinson's Disease

A recent survey of cannabis users, 1881 individuals, through the Fox Insight study provides real-world data on cannabis use in individuals with Parkinson's disease (iwPD)¹. Over 70% of respondents used cannabis only for medical reasons but only about 30% discussed its use with their doctor. Most iwPD used predominantly cannabidiol (CBD)-based products, however, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)-based products had more symptomatic benefit as well as likelihood of side effects. The symptoms that were most often improved were pain, anxiety, agitation, and sleep reported in over half of iwPD. The most reported side effects by 20-30% of respondents were dry mouth, dizziness, and thinking problems. While THC cannabis products are more likely to have symptomatic benefit for non-motor symptoms, they are also more likely to have side effects. iwPD should be encouraged to discuss cannabis use with their doctors to determine the risk versus benefit of using these products, especially as it becomes more legally accessible nationwide.

Holden SK, Domen CH, Sillau S, Liu Y, Leehey MA. Higher Risk, Higher Reward? Self-Reported Effects of Real-World Cannabis Use in Parkinson's Disease. *Mov Disord Clin Pract.* 2022 Jan 28;9(3):340-350. doi: 10.1002/mdc3.13414. PMID: 35392299; PMCID: PMC8974868.

Use of Mobile Apps for Self-care in People With Parkinson Disease: Systematic Review

Self-care is an important and necessary practice that promotes healthy living and enhances overall well-being for everyone but is even more beneficial in improving the lives of people living with PD. Since the emergence of telehealth, mobile apps have been developed to track self-care activities for PD. In this systematic review that followed PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) model, researchers sought to explore elements of self-care mobile apps for people with PD. 17 studies that included 14 observational or quasi-experimental studies and 3 randomized controlled trials were selected. A total of 1246 people with PD whose ages ranged from 34 to 84 years participated in the studies. The various self-care activities require different interventions to perform the activity therefore it is difficult to compare the outcomes. Self-care management assessed the participants gait improvement after performing walking. Self-care

monitoring assessed the participants' monitoring of motor and non-motor symptoms and self-care maintenance assessed the use of apps for medication adherence and exercise. This systematic review looked at studies that explored self-care monitoring, self-care management and self-care maintenance but does not provide sufficient evidence to compare the effectiveness of using mobile apps for disease-specific self-care activities. Wearable devices and smartphones with sensors allow for monitoring of motor symptoms but more research is needed to study the use of these apps and their effects on quality of life.

Lee, J., Yeom, I., Chung, M. L., Kim, Y., Yoo, S., & Kim, E. (2022). Use of Mobile Apps for Self-care in People With Parkinson Disease: Systematic Review. *JMIR mHealth and uHealth*, 10(1), e33944
<https://doi.org/10.2196/33944>

Diffusion Magnetic Resonance Imaging Detects Progression in Parkinson's Disease: A Placebo-Controlled Trial of Rasagiline

Rasagiline is a MAO-B inhibitor whose potential as a disease-modifying therapy has remained controversial. In this study from the University of Florida, the authors propose to test the hypothesis that rasagiline is neuroprotective, using substantia nigra (SN) MRI free-water as a putative biomarker of neurodegeneration. They enrolled 90 subjects with early-stage Parkinson's disease (<5 years since diagnosis) between January 2017 and October 2020. Rasagiline 1mg daily was compared to placebo in a prospective, randomized, double-blind trial design. The primary outcome was the change in SN free-water at 1 year. Secondary clinical outcomes included standardized measures of motor function, cognition, depression, and quality of life. There was no difference in primary or secondary outcomes between the rasagiline and placebo groups. However, baseline SN MRI free-water values were associated with the longitudinal change in both MDS-UPDRS-motor, Part III total and bradykinesia scores. Furthermore, there was a longitudinal increase in SN free-water, although this longitudinal change did not correlate with clinical progression. The authors conclude that SN MRI free-water could be used as a marker to predict and monitor disease progression in Parkinson's disease.

Arpin DJ, Mitchell T, Archer DB, Burciu RG, Chu WT, Gao H, Guttuso T, Hess CW, Lai S, Malaty IA, McFarland NR, Pasternak O, Price CC, Shukla AW, Wu SS, Okun MS, Vaillancourt DE. Diffusion Magnetic Resonance Imaging Detects Progression in Parkinson's Disease: A Placebo-Controlled Trial of Rasagiline. *Mov Disord*. 2022 Feb;37(2):325-333. doi: 10.1002/mds.28838. Epub 2021 Nov 1. PMID: 34724257; PMCID: PMC9019575.

Committee Activities

Clinical Care Committee

- **Rotation of Committee Chair:** Leadership for the clinical care committee rotates amongst the PADRECCs. The Philadelphia PADRECC leads the committee for May/June. The committee meets via conference call the first Tuesday of the month at 12pm (EST)

- **Standardize and Optimize Clinical Care:** The committee continues to discuss treatment strategies, new medications and other procedures, and other clinical issues to improve patient care and outcomes. It also serves to provide clinical support to the consortium network by focusing on procedures and measures to standardize clinical care across the PADRECC network. Recent agenda items have included:
 1. Discussion regarding the use of neuropsychologists in the PADRECCs and interest in forming a work group for neuropsychologists who partner with PADRECCs and Consortium sites to provide evaluations of Veterans with Parkinson's disease.
 2. Clinical experience using different forms of botulinum therapy in the management of Parkinson's symptoms such as dystonia, blepharospasm, and sialorrhea.
 3. Ways to incorporate advanced practice pharmacists in a movement disorder clinic.
 4. How to use VA-developed Apps to improve care of Veterans with Parkinson's disease.

Education Committee

- **PADRECC/EES Movement Disorder Series-Webinar:** knowledge-based webinars to provide VHA healthcare professionals with current practice standards and emerging trends in the treatment of Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders. CEs are typically provided for the live webinars. Check out the following link for a list of past webinars and if you are interested in receiving a recording of a past webinar please email Gretchen.glenn@va.gov and list the date/topic of interest:
https://www.parkinsons.va.gov/Consortium/Presentations/Audio_Conference/MDS.asp
 - **Movement Disorders Series Part 1-Webinar** was held on **February 10th**. Topics included: PD 101, Whole Health, Beyond PD and Exercise. Planning is underway for MDS Part 2 which will be held in September 2022.
 - **Nursing Care Across the Parkinson's Disease Spectrum: An Introduction-** was held on April 27th. This knowledge-based, live virtual training provided nurses an overview of the different nursing roles (i.e. LPN, RN, APRN, PA) across the PD spectrum. We had another fantastic turnout for this webinar with over 200 participants. Thank you to all who attended. Plans are underway to offer this program again and possibly expand CME to social workers and rehab clinicians. You can view a recording of the webinar [here](#)
- **VHA/PADRECC & The Parkinson's Foundation Partnership:** Goal of the partnership is to improve the care and quality of life for Veterans living with PD through collaborative education, research and services. This committee spearheads many of the projects for this partnership. Please check out the Transmitter email for current partnership offerings/activities
 - **Parkinson's Foundation, PADRECC & VHA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships-Joint National Webinar-** held on **April 28th, 2022-** "Understanding Parkinson's Disease and Mental Health in the Veteran Community". **Click here for webinar recording:**
[Parkinson.org/VA2022](https://www.parkinson.org/VA2022)
 - **Parkinson's Foundation Team Training-Scholarships:**
 - **Advance Team Training for Alumni of Team Training-Summer 2022** [Team Training Scholarship Information](#)
 - **Parkinson's Foundation 2022 Centers of Excellence Leadership Conference (CLC)-**
 Seven PADRECC staff members were invited to attend this conference to further partnership efforts, outreach and networking with PF and CLC members. The program focused on access to care for all people with PD, featuring panels of experts discussing care access, hospital care, patient

engagement, exercise, rehabilitation medicine, palliative care, and clinical research. It was a valuable conference for PADRECC to attend with many new ideas for projects to further our education mission and collaboration with PF.

- **National Website Maintenance:** The committee performs periodic maintenance checks of the National Website to ensure information is current and up-to-date.
- **PADRECC Transmitter:** This committee continues to assemble and distribute this *e*-newsletter every other month.
- **Resources available on the National Website:**
 - **Patient Education Brochures-** <https://www.parkinsons.va.gov/patients.asp>
 - Exercise and Physical Activity
 - Fall Prevention
 - Motor Symptoms
 - Non-Motor Symptoms
 - Agent Orange and Toxic Exposures and PD
 - **PADRECC Support/Education Groups:** The PADRECCs are now holding virtual groups open to Veterans and care partners interested in attending. Please check out the National Website for listing of dates/times and contact person to register for the groups and please share with your patients/care partners: <https://www.parkinsons.va.gov/patients.asp>
 - **My Parkinson's Story-**<https://www.parkinsons.va.gov/patients.asp>
A series of short videos prepared by the VA PADRECCs addressing various aspects of Parkinson's disease.
 - **Suggested Education Essentials for Veterans with PD**
 - **Digital version:** <https://www.parkinsons.va.gov/patients.asp>

A small red square icon with a white document symbol and the letters 'PDF' below it.

Suggested Education
Essentials
 - **Print friendly version:**
 - **PADRECC Pocket Card:** *Parkinson's Disease Quick Reference Guide for Initiating Therapy* is available on the National Website: <https://www.parkinsons.va.gov/Consortium/PocketCard/PocketCard19.pdf>