

Alternative and Complementary Therapies in Parkinson's Disease



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Acknowledgement

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Parkinson's:

What's in our toolbox now?

- Carbidopa/levodopa (Sinemet)
- Dopamine agonists (Mirapex, Requip, Neupro)
- Selegiline, Rasagiline, Entacapone
- Amantadine
- Deep Brain Stimulation
- Other supportive medicines and therapies



Western Medicine's Toolbox

- Good Evidence:
 - Quality of Life
 - Duration of Life
 - Especially early in disease
- But later in disease, benefit is less...
 - Side effects
 - More problems in the disease (constipation...)
 - Surgical treatments only for select patients

So what else is out there?

- Traditional Indian
- Traditional Chinese
- Herbal Medicines
- Yoga/Tai Chi
- Diet
- Exercise
- Music and Art



Traditional Medicine

- Ayurvedic medicine (ancient India)
- Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM)

Ayurvedic Medicine (India)

- Over 5,000 years: since ancient India
- Balance of mind/body, not just disease
- *Shodan* = detoxification, cleansing therapies
- *Shaman* = balance, using yoga and meditation
- *Rasayana* = tonic therapies
- Mucuna Pruriens:
 - used to Parkinson's for centuries
 - legume that contains levodopa

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

- Health = Balance of Yin and Yang
- Liver (yin) and invasion of wind (yang)
- Liver's energy channel is thought to coordinate and smooth movement
- Direct **Qi** (“chee”) to restore balance, using:
 - Herbs
 - Acupuncture/acupressure
 - Etc...

Herbal Medicines: CAUTION

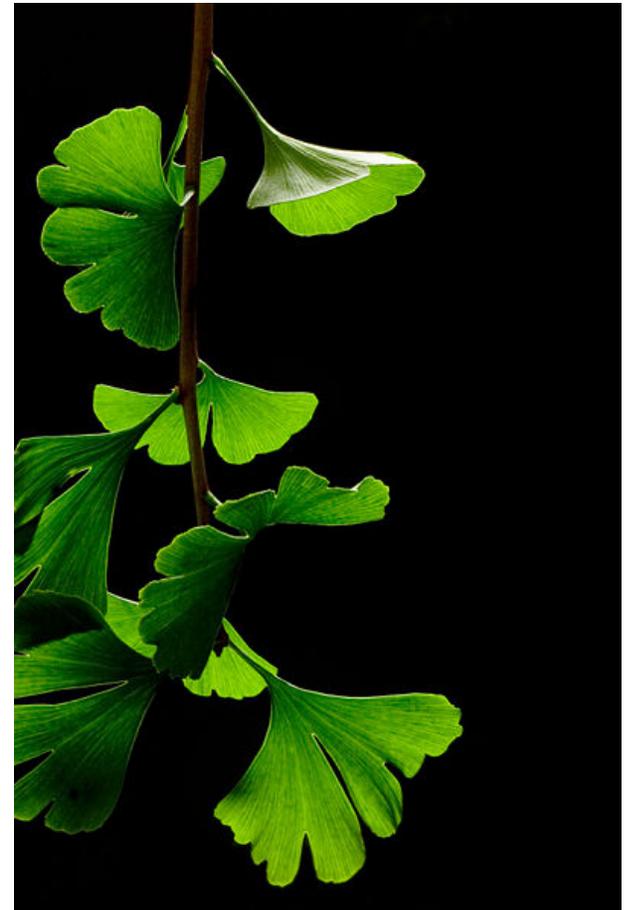
- Can be frustrating for patient...
- Why your doctor is concerned or reluctant...
 - Lack of evidence, difficult to measure well-being
 - We don't get trained enough in medical school
 - Not regulated by FDA
 - **Legitimate concerns about...**
 - **Dangerous Drug interactions**
 - **Serious herbal side effects**
 - **Purity of contents**

Herbal Medicines

- Recently, more interaction with “Western” medicine...
- PDR for Herbal Medicines (600 compounds)
- More research:
 - National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NIH)
 - More centers at university hospitals

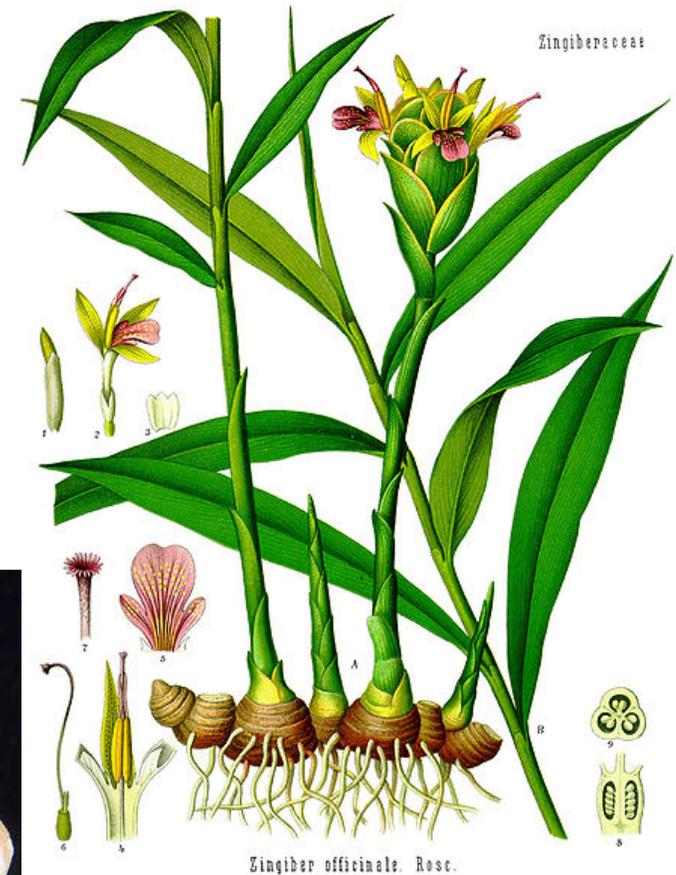
Herbs: Ginkgo Biloba

- Antioxidant
- Circulatory stimulant (brain function, levodopa)
- Help concentration
- Side effect: diarrhea
- Ginseng may overstimulate



Herbs: Ginger

- *Zingiker Officinalis*
- Can help nausea/vomiting
upset stomach
- Boiling root in water,
or nibbled on



Herbs: Milk Thistle

- *Silybum marianum*
- Used to help liver function for > 2000 years
- May help clear toxins



Herbs: Passion Flower

- *Passiflora incarnata*
- May help agitation and insomnia



Herbs: Evening Primrose Oil

- *Oenothera biennis*
- May increase level of levodopa
- May help decrease tremors



Herbs: Triphala

- *Three fruits: harada, amla, bihara*
- Ayurvedic Medicine
- May help constipation
- May increase bile secretion
- May help digestion



Herbs: St. John's Wort

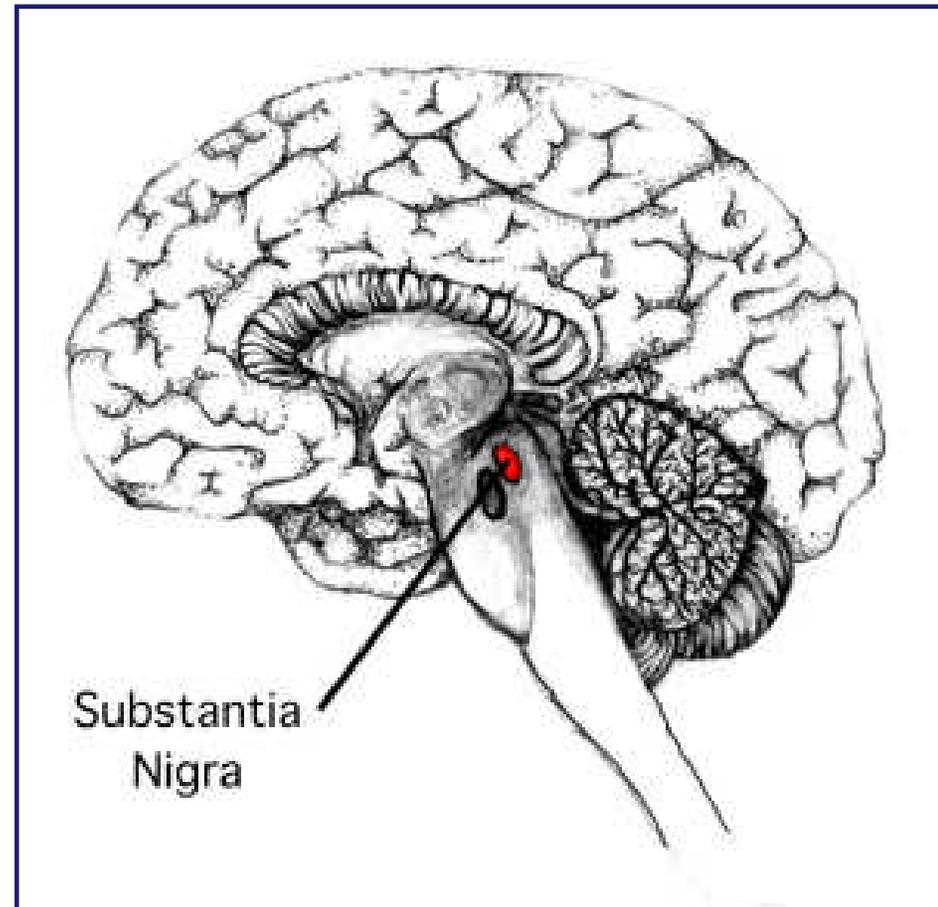
- *Hypericum perforatum*
- Used in Germany as a mild antidepressant
- Works like an SSRI



- **NEVER taken with SSRI, should not replace SSRI**
- **NEVER with Blood thinners (aspirin, coumadin, warfarin, heparin, lovenox, etc...)**
- **Always ask all your doctors before considering!**

What is *Neuroprotection*?

- Future therapies that will help protect the brain cells that are being damaged in Parkinson's.
- Therefore, hoping to slow the disease down.



Bad News, OK News, Good News

- **BAD:** Most trials for neuroprotection failed (Vit.E.); antioxidants, etc... best just in diet/exercise.
- **OK:**
 - Creatine under study here at UCSF
 - Co-enzyme Q10, 1200 mg/day
 - antioxidant, larger trial, not advised at this time
- **GOOD:** New research finding what's going on in cells of Parkinson's, will hopefully lead to a medicine that slows or stops the disease

Herbal Medicines: CAUTIONS, TIPS

- Avoid “Cures”
- Nothing is proven
- No guarantee of safety

- Again, not FDA-regulated (?potency, purity)

- Expensive \$\$\$\$
- Not covered by most insurance

Herbal Medicine: CAUTIONS, TIPS

- Advice from licensed herbalists, naturopaths, nutritionist, D.O.M. (Doctor of Oriental Medicine)
- National Center for Compl. and Alt. Med. (NIH)
- Reputable manufactures
 - Address on the label
 - Detailed contents on the label
 - Sealed

Yoga

- 5,000 years of use in India
- Balance in mind/body through practice:
 - asanas (poses) and pranayama (breathing)
- Help balance, strength, posture, flexibility, well-being
- Decrease stress
- Studies on Blood pressure, asthma, digestion
- Widely available: senior, rehab, and fitness centers
- Wide range of styles and difficulty
- Start with basic/beginner class

Tai Chi

- Practiced in Taoism, ancient Chinese
- Movements coordinated w/ mind and breathing
- Hopes to help agility and tranquility
- May help balance, flexibility, heart fitness, well being
- Some versions even seated



Acupuncture and Shiatsu

- Acupuncture
 - 2,500 years in China
 - Tiny needles at certain points (acupoints)
 - Correct imbalance in flow of Qi within the body
 - Few publications, no solid evidence in Parkinson's
 - But has been shown to have real physio effects
 - Low risk: infection, bleeding, discomfort
- Acupressure (Shiatsu)
 - Some pressure points as acupuncture

Massage Therapy

- Long recognized to help Parkinson's patients
- Decrease stress, stiffness
- Wide range of choices
 - TCM: Shiatsu = acupressure
 - Swedish: Gentle kneading of muscles
 - Deep Tissue
- Accredited school of massage therapy.

Diet

- Diet:
 - Low saturated fats, especially trans-fats
 - More fruits and vegetables
 - The Meditterrean diet (fish, omega-3's, heart)
 - Coffee?
 - The **PROTEIN** Question

 - Beware of fad diets!

 - Kathryne Holden, M.S. (“Cook Well, Stay well” and “Eat Well, Stay Well”...)
 - NPF Pamphlet:
 - Weight gain and loss
 - Constipation and bloating
 - Menus and recipes

Fitness

- At least 30 minutes, 3/x week
 - Stretching
 - Breathing
 - Cardiovascular (walking)
 - Strengthening
 - Balance
- Help of trainer or physical therapist
- Yoga, Tai Chi: as we talked about

Other things that can help...

- Music Therapy
- Dance Therapy
- Art Therapy
- Pet Therapy

Final Points

- Yoga and Tai Chi – great exercise, fun, relaxing, decrease stress
- Some herbal therapies have some rationale, but!!!...
- \$\$ Cost \$\$, can interact with meds
- Beware of “Cure-alls”
- “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.”

Resources

- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NIH)
- National Parkinson's Foundation
 - (800) 327-4545 (free booklets)
- Other

Thank you.