Parkinson's disease (PD) is a chronic, progressive condition that involves a gradual loss of nerve cells in the brain, leading to problems with movement control and other non-movement-related symptoms.Cause by a combination of genetic, environmental and ageing factors.

Age is a risk factor; most people who get PD are aged 60 or above.

Around 6.3 million people have PD worldwide.

Symptoms

Symptoms are a result of degeneration of dopaminergic nerve cells. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter responsible for the control of movement.

Motor symptoms include: tremor, slowness of movement, muscle stiffness, balance problems.

Non-motor symptoms include: depression, dementia, fatigue, pain, sleep problems, digestive problems.

Since PD is a progressive disease, new symptoms appear continuously and existing symptoms slowly become more severe over time.

Diagnosis and treatment

There are no objective tests to diagnose PD. It is currently diagnosed based on cardinal motor symptoms.

Symptoms in the early stages of the disease can be treated effectively in most cases. Unfortunately, disease progression leads to recurrence of symptoms or symptoms associated with medications.

The aim of treatment is to control and relieve symptoms.

Treatment normally involves supportive therapy (such as physiotherapy or occupational therapy), medication and, in some cases, surgery.

Due to advances in treatment, most PD patients now have a normal or near-normal life expectancy.

Morning off

While medication suppresses the appearance of symptoms, they may reappear or worsen in the morning, when the effect of the treatment has worn off. This is called 'morning off'.

Morning off can have a detrimental impact to the patient’s quality of life and can significantly disrupt or delay their morning routine.

Nearly 6 in 10 Parkinson's patients experience morning off symptoms.

References: