Is There a Link Between Parkinson’s Disease and Migraines?

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Risk of Parkinson's Disease

There has been evidence that people that have migraines in middle age are more than twice as likely to have Parkinson’s disease at a later age. Patients with migraine auras and other early warning signs of an impending migraine are more at risk, the study found. However, the risk is still low, according to experts.

The link between migraines and Parkinson’s disease may be due to the dysfunction of the neurotransmitter in the brain called dopamine. Dopamine, or the lack of it, is the cause of Parkinson’s disease and the symptoms that accompany it.

Migraines are thought to be from temporary changes chemically in the brain as well as its blood vessels. Many people who have migraines have a family member with the condition as well. Both men and women alike can be afflicted with them. It is the most common brain disorder and it has also been linked to other health problems like cerebrovascular and heart disease.

Things to Know About Migraines

- Symptoms of a migraine included nausea and vomiting as well as yawning. This is thought to be related to dopamine receptor stimulation.
- Even though having a history of migraines is associated with an increased risk for Parkinson’s disease, the risk is still pretty low.
- Women with migraine with aura were also more likely to have a family history of Parkinson's disease compared to those with no headaches.
- The fact that dysfunction of the dopamine in the brain is related to Parkinson’s disease as well as restless legs syndrome, it could also be the cause of migraines as hypothesized for many years in the medical establishment.

A study in the American Academy of Neurology examined people between the ages of 33 to 65 over 25 years to determine whether migraines are linked to Parkinson’s disease. Group One did not experience headaches, Group 2 had headaches without the migraine symptoms and Group Three had migraines with aura. They all were assessed for any symptoms of Parkinson’s disease, been diagnosed with it, or restless leg syndrome. It was found that 2.4% of those with migraine with aura had the disease, whereas only 1.1% with no headaches had it. The participants with migraine with aura were 3.6 times more likely to have four of the six symptoms of Parkinson’s disease. The people with migraine with no aura were 2.3 times as likely.

The study concluded that of the people with migraine with aura, 19.7% had symptoms of Parkinson’s disease. The migraine with no aura had 12.6% of the group with symptoms and 7.5 % of those with no headaches had Parkinson’s symptoms.

This study reflects that there is a small link between migraines and Parkinson’s disease. It is useful information

for people who do suffer from migraines. They can watch for symptoms of Parkinson’s disease and seek treatment much earlier for it.