

Parkinsons Disease 101

Parkinson's Disease is the leading neurological disease in the world, followed closely by Alzheimer's. Both are degenerative neurological diseases, are progressive, do not go into remission and HAVE NO CURE. Parkinson's Disease (PD) affects close to 2 MILLION people...that's more than those suffering from Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy and Lou Gehrig's Disease combined!

Nearly 40 % of those diagnosed each year are between twenty and fifty years old! Parkinson's is no longer an "older person's disease" – it is striking young adults just as their careers are taking off and they are raising young children. This is called "Young Onset Parkinson's Disease" (YOPD). Perhaps the most recognizable person in this category is television and movie star Michael J. Fox, who started a foundation to raise funds for "fast track" Parkinson's Disease research.

The diagnosis of Parkinson's is DEVASTATING! Most newly diagnosed patients feel alone, isolated, uneducated and depressed. Many patients and their family members will be in denial of the diagnosis, even when the symptoms are clearly present. Education about Parkinson's is a critical need, along with support.

Eighty six percent of our population knows someone with Parkinson's, yet is one of the least noticed and least supported diseases! There are a couple of reasons why the largest neurological disease in the world is so little understood...

1. When we take our medications, the public does not see our symptoms! You don't see our tremors, the muscle rigidity, the slow shuffle, the unusable hands, the sleepless nights, the restless legs and flailing limbs. Parkinson's is considered one of the "invisible" diseases!
2. Most of us have no reason to know – or care – about a disease until it affects us or someone we know. Yet, we don't have to have breast cancer to support it, we don't have to have MS to support Jerry's Kids. We don't have to have diabetes to help seek a cure.
It's time to learn about Parkinson's so we WILL care and support research for the cure!
Nobody chooses to have Parkinson's Disease!
Once diagnosed, the only choice WE HAVE is
HOW WE WILL HANDLE IT!

proACTIVE parkinsons project was founded to reach out into the community to offer comfort, support education and empowerment to patients, their caregivers and families. Nobody should have to face this disease alone! The more a new Parkinson's patient learns about the disease, the quicker they will understand that while it cannot yet be cured, it can be managed well and many people live long, full lives with Parkinson's, such as the late Katherine Hepburn and the late Pope John Paul, Muhammad Ali and Janet Reno.

If you or an organization you belong to – church group, civic or community organization – wants to learn more about Parkinson's and how we as individuals can make a difference in finding a cure, please contact me and we'll arrange a program/presentation to meet your needs and timeframe.

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