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Cortical thinning pattern in Parkinson's disease stages

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It has been well described the subcortical areas are the first affected; however, the progression to cortical involvement and how it correlates with disease severity are still unclear. 56 patients with PD (59.52 ± 9.9) according to the UK Parkinson's Disease Society Brain Bank criteria were compared with 27 healthy controls (HC) (57.77 ± 10.06). Anatomical T1-weighted MRI images were obtained on a 3 T scanner. We used the civet pipeline and the SurfStat toolbox on MatlabR2012b to process and analyze the images. We divided patients into 3 groups according to disease severity measured by H&Y scale and compared each group with healthy controls (HC). We also correlated patients' cortical thickness with H&Y, NMS, UPDRS, UPDRS III and SCOPA scores. There was a correlation between patients CT and UPDRS scores in the right superior temporal gyrus ($p < 0.05$). The comparison between group 1 and HC revealed decreased cortical thickness in left superior temporal gyrus, left gyrus rectus and left olfactory cortex ($p < 0.05$); Regarding the group 2, the areas with lower CT were right postcentral gyrus, right supplementary motor area and right inferior frontal gyrus ($p < 0.05$). For group 3 significant lower CT was found in left inferior frontal gyrus, left precentral and postcentral gyrus, left SMA, left inferior frontal gyrus, left gyrus rectus, right temporal pole, right fusiform gyrus, right middle temporal gyrus, and right occipital gyrus ($p < 0.05$). Our results show that there is an increase in cortical thinning across PD stages; Progression of PD has been well demonstrated using other neuroimaging methods and cortical thickness measure is also a useful tool to assess disease stages.

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Neuropsychiatric changes in patients with primary dystonia: influence of pallidal deep brain stimulation

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Background: In primary dystonia patients (PTD), along with motor symptoms neuropsychiatric changes are often found.

Abnormalities of mood and behavior contribute a lot to decrease in quality of life.

Objective: To reveal neuropsychiatric abnormalities in PTD and to trace their evolution following pallidal deep brain stimulation.

Methods: We assessed 62 patients operated for bilateral GPi-DBS: 16 patients with pharmaco-resistant cervical, 22 patients with segmental, and 24 patients with generalized PTD. Mean age at surgery was 41.7 ± 13.7 years; mean disease duration was 13.1 ± 11.7 years. Quantitative neuropsychiatric testing was performed prior to surgery and at 3, 6, and 12 months following GPi-DBS. For assessment of anxiety we used Spilberger scale; for depression – Beck inventory (BDI); for obsessive–compulsive disorder – Goodman screening test; for impulsivity – Barratt scale; for apathy – Starkstein scale; for hypomania symptoms – checklist HCL-32; for quality of life – SF-36 questionnaire.

Results: 61.3% of PTD patients had primarily elevated personal anxiety score, reactive anxiety was increased only in 21.0%. 51.6% of patients suffered moderate to severe depression. In 24.2%, obsessive–compulsive behavior was a considerable issue. 17.7% of patients had pathological impulsivity, 29.0% had apathy. In the course of GPi-DBS, depression scores significantly decreased ($p < 0.01$). From the 6th month of follow-up, reactive anxiety reduced ($p < 0.05$). Personal anxiety changed insignificantly. OCD-symptoms ameliorated ($p < 0.05$), however, apathy features showed increment. Impulsivity was not significantly influenced. Tendency to hypomanic shift was observed. Altogether, improvement in physical component of health following GPi-DBS was more pronounced than in mental component (SF-36).

Conclusions: In PTD, neuropsychiatric changes are frequent. GPi-DBS is safe for neuropsychiatric profile of patients. Moreover, GPi-DBS might lead to some extent of functional improvement in mood and behavior. Nevertheless, mental component of health seems not to be normalized.

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Gamma knife thalamotomy for essential tremor: the first preliminary Chilean experience

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Background: The nucleus ventralis intermedius (VIM) has been widely considered as the preferred target for tremor treatment using different techniques such as radiofrequency ablation (RF), deep brain stimulation (DBS) and more recently gamma knife radiosurgery (GKRS).

Objective: The purpose of the present study is to present the preliminary experience in Chile with the use of GKRS for the treatment of medically refractory essential tremor (ET).

Patients and methods/material and methods: Five ET patients underwent Gamma Knife Thalamotomy (GKT). High Resolution Magnetic resonance imaging guidance was used for VIM targeting. A single 4-mm isocenter was used to target a maximum dose of 130 Gray (Gy) to the VIM. Pre and post treatment clinical evaluation was performed using Global (A + B + C) Fahn–Tolosa–Marín tremor rating scale (FTM).

Results: The mean patient age was 68.2 years (57–80) with a mean follow-up of 18 months (6–28). In four patients (80%) an important clinical improvement was documented (mean pre-treatment FTM = 32.5 and mean post-treatment FTM = 17.9). In one patient no significant effect was observed and a second GKT was performed achieving a FTM score improvement from 28.9 to 11.5. No complication was observed.

Conclusion: GKT could be considered a safe and effective neurosurgical treatment for medically refractory essential tremor. These results are in agreement with other GKT series published in the literature and are equivalent to those obtained using radiofrequency and deep brain stimulation.

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Peripheral biomarkers profile in patients with parkinsonisms

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Background: Neurodegenerative diseases are increasing their prevalence in world population, so the search for new diagnostic methods has become an important necessity. Parkinson's disease (PD) as well as other forms of parkinsonisms are classified as protein misfolding diseases and evaluation of proteins like tau, alpha-synuclein (A-syn), Amyloid Beta peptide (AB) and AB precursor protein (ABPP) have been considered as biomarkers.

Methods: Three groups of subjects were recruited: PD (n = 30), Parkinson plus (n = 20) and control subjects (n = 20). Complete clinical evaluations including transcranial sonography and olfactory test were made. Blood platelets tau and ABPP were evaluated and A-syn was measured in saliva with Western blot and ELISA assays. Biomarkers profiles in different groups were compared with multivariate analyses.

Results: We describe differences in protein profiles, in particular in platelet tau between PD, Parkinson plus and control groups. It is possible to generate and associate peripheral protein profiles to standard diagnostic tests to increase diagnostic accuracy.

Conclusion: Peripheral protein profiles may serve as non-invasive biomarkers for diagnosis and follow up in parkinsonisms.

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The relationship between smoking and substantia nigra hyper-echogenicity in Parkinson's disease patients

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Introduction: Epidemiological studies have found a significant negative association between cigarette smoking and Parkinson's disease (PD). Some studies also suggested a protective effect of smoking on Alzheimer's disease. No research has been conducted on the substantia nigra hyper-echogenicity (SNH) in smoking and non-smoking patients with PD.

Objective: To identify the relationship between cigarette smoking and cognitive impairment, and area of SNH detected by transcranial sonography (TCS) in Parkinson's disease patients.

Methods: We compared the Unified Parkinson's disease Rating Scale (UPDRS), Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), Frontal Assessment Battery (FAB) and Parkinson's Disease-Cognitive Rating Scale (PD-CRS) scores and TCS findings in 86 PD patients with and without smoking history.

Results: The presence of cognitive impairment in PD patients was accompanied by an increase in the SNH area (Spearman MMSE $r = -0,30$, $p = 0,004$, FAB $r = -0,36$, $p = 0,0006$, PD-CRS $r = -0,31$, $p = 0,004$) and an increase in the width of 3 ventricle (Spearman MMSE $r = -0,44$, $p < 0,0001$, FAB $r = -0,45$, $p < 0,0001$, PD-CRS $r = -0,39$, $p < 0,0001$). The average SN area was higher in dementia patients than in patients without dementia ($0,36 \pm 0,06 \text{ cm}^2$ vs. $0,32 \pm 0,06 \text{ cm}^2$, Mann-Whitney $p = 0,003$). Our study did not show dependence the results of neuropsychological testing and smoking history, but found that smokers had a smaller SNH area and less severity of motor disorders (Mann-Whitney $p = 0,033$ and $p = 0,025$ respectively).

Conclusion: This finding indicates that a history of smoking not only reduces the risk of PD, but also is a factor influencing the course of PD.

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Clinicogenetic study of CHCHD2 in patients with autosomal dominant familial Parkinson's disease

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We have identified a novel causative gene, CHCHD2 responsible for patients with autosomal dominant cases of Parkinson's disease (PD). Family members had a missense mutation (CHCHD2, 182C>T, Thr611Ile) in family A by next-generation sequencing. We obtained samples from a further 340 index patients with autosomal dominant PD, 517 patients with sporadic PD, and 559 controls. Additional three CHCHD2 mutations in four of 341 index cases from independent families with autosomal dominant PD were detected by CHCHD2 mutation screening: 182C>T (Thr611Ile), 434G>A (Arg145Gln), and 300 + 5G>A. In SH-SY5Y cells, the 300 + 5G>A mutation but not the other two mutations caused exon 2 skipping. CHCHD2 mutations could be a cause for autosomal dominant PD. Clinical phenotypes of patients with CHCHD2 mutations show tremor dominant PD and uptake of ¹²³I-MIBG myocardial scintigraphy of one patient from family A is decreasing. However, dementia and urinary urgency were not observed among all patients with CHCHD2 mutations