WEAKNESS AND FATIGABILITY IN PARKINSON’S DISEASE

Featuring Dr. A. Joseph Threlkeld
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ABSTRACT

When considering movement disorders as a category of diseases, Parkinson’s disease (PD) has the highest prevalence worldwide. Per capita, Nebraska has the highest number of people with PD. The hallmark motor symptoms of PD are tremor, bradykinesia, rigidity and postural instability however these are manifested to varying degrees in each person with PD. In addition to the more apparent motor manifestations, PD symptoms include weakness and fatigue. Approximately 58% of people with PD rate fatigue as one of his/her top three most disabling symptoms. As the disease progresses, the generation of sufficiently forceful repetitive muscle contractions paired with appropriately sequenced fluid motor programs becomes increasingly difficult for people with PD. Our research team has begun to explore the central and peripheral components of strength and fatigability in the subpopulation of people with PD that identify fatigue as a disabling symptom. We are considering aging and dopaminergic medication as potential contributors.

ABOUT DR. THRELKELD

A. Joseph Threlkeld, PT, PhD, is currently a professor in the department of Physical Therapy at Creighton University. He recently did his research sabbatical at both the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and Regis University. The projects he worked on while there were entitled Muscle Activity and Movement of People with Parkinson’s Disease and Deep Brain Stimulators During Treadmill Walking with Support and Use of Diagnostic Ultrasound to Measure Muscle Thickness Changes of the Scapular Retractors during Graded Manual Muscle Tests respectively.