

## Altered communication in Parkinson's disease, its role in stigmatisation of the condition and effect on social relationships

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### ABSTRACT

Communication difficulties in Parkinson's disease (PD) arise not only as the result of the motor symptoms of the disorder, but also as a consequence of cognitive and affective impairments which are recognised as being part of the disease process. These changes are thought to account for much of the stigma associated with the condition, thereby complicating the ability of patients to inter-relate with others, including their closest family. This inevitably affects quality of life for both the patient and those family members involved in his/her care.

The present paper presents an analysis of how the deficits in motor and cognitive function associated with PD in the form of reduced facial expressivity, altered language skills, motor and cognitive slowness and disturbances in the pragmatic aspects of language affect the communication abilities of patients with the disorder and give rise to stigmatisation, which in turn impacts the disability seen in PD.

**Keywords:** Parkinson's disease, stigmatisation, communication, pragmatic language skills

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