

About Parkinson's Disease-Related Hallucinations and Delusions



What is Parkinson's disease?

Parkinson's disease is a progressive nervous system disorder that affects about one million people in the United States.^{1,2} Signs and symptoms can vary with people experiencing both motor symptoms (such as slowness of movement, resting tremors, stiffness in arms and legs, and trouble with balance) and non-motor symptoms (such as constipation, impaired bladder control, anxiety and depression, loss of concentration, forgetfulness, hallucinations and delusions).²⁻⁶ When patients experience hallucinations and/or delusions related to Parkinson's disease, doctors may refer to it as Parkinson's disease psychosis.⁴

What are Parkinson's disease-related hallucinations and delusions?



Around **50 percent** of people living with Parkinson's may experience hallucinations and/or delusions during the course of their disease.⁷ Non-motor symptoms, including hallucinations and delusions, can have a tremendous impact on the lives of patients and their caregivers.⁸ Parkinson's disease-related hallucinations and delusions may add to the burden of caring for a loved one with Parkinson's disease.^{9,10}



A **hallucination** is defined as seeing, hearing, or otherwise perceiving things that are not really there.⁴

A **delusion** is defined as believing things are not true despite evidence to the contrary.⁴



These symptoms can also cause significant safety challenges, including increased risk of falls and fractures.¹³



Hallucinations and delusions generally worsen over time, and it gets harder for people who experience them to know whether or not what they are experiencing is real.^{4,11} However, up to **90 percent** of patients don't proactively tell their physicians about these symptoms.^{3,12}



They can lead to a loss of independence, given the higher risk of nursing home placement and hospitalization.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

Hallucinations and delusions may be described as:⁴



SEEING THINGS THAT OTHERS DON'T
• Such as people, animals, or objects.



HEARING THINGS THAT OTHERS DON'T
• Such as hearing sounds, music, or voices.



PARANOIA
• Such as believing people are talking about you or trying to access your money.



FALSE BELIEFS
• Such as fears of loved ones stealing from you, putting you in harm's way, or being unfaithful.

Understanding and Diagnosing Parkinson's Disease-Related Hallucinations and Delusions

The exact cause of Parkinson's disease-related hallucinations and delusions is unknown, although certain brain chemicals and receptors (e.g., dopamine and serotonin) may play a role. Parkinson's-related hallucinations and delusions can be part of the natural progression of the disease and be exacerbated by dopaminergic therapy.⁴ There is no accurate way to predict which patients with Parkinson's will develop hallucinations and delusions.⁴ Those experiencing symptoms of these described hallucinations and/or delusions should talk with their healthcare provider (HCP) about potential treatment options. It is important for people living with Parkinson's disease-related hallucinations delusions to discuss the full range of Parkinson's disease symptoms with their movement disorder specialist and/or other HCP.¹⁷

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