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The psychological correlates of fatigue in Parkinson's disease: contribution of maladaptive metacognitive beliefs

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Introduction: Psychological factors can underlie fatigue in neurological disorders, but its relationship to fatigue in Parkinson's disease (PD) has not been explored [1,2,3].

Objective: To assess the association between maladaptive metacognitive beliefs and presence of fatigue in PD.

Methods: Ninety-eight consecutive outpatients with PD (61% male; median age: 66.50 years) were assessed in terms of demographic, clinical, medication treatment, cognitive, or behavioural characteristics including metacognitive beliefs (Metacognitions Questionnaire-30 or MCQ). Fatigue was ascertained by PD-related diagnostic criteria. Univariate statistical approach (Mann-Whitney and Pearson chi-square tests) was used to compare PD patients with (*f*-PD) or without (*nf*-PD) fatigue in terms of demographic, clinical, medication treatment, cognitive, behavioural, and metacognitive measures.

Results: Twenty-one PD patients (21%) displayed fatigue. The *f*-PD group scored higher on the MCQ-total score, MCQ-Cognitive Confidence subscale, and all behavioral measures ($p_s < 0.01$) relative to *nf*-PD. They also had a more advanced Hoehn and Yahr stage and Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale-III score.

Conclusion: Maladaptive metacognitive beliefs such as the lack of cognitive confidence may play a key role to trigger and maintain fatigue in PD. Future studies, using a multivariate statistical approach, are needed to confirm these preliminary findings in a larger sample of patients with fatigue and to assess if modification of such metacognitive beliefs has the potential to ameliorate fatigue in PD.

References:

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