



REVIEW ARTICLE

The social impact of Parkinson's disease in Spain: Report by the Spanish Foundation for the Brain[☆]

R. García-Ramos^{a,*}, E. López Valdés^a, L. Ballesteros^b, S. Jesús^{c,d}, P. Mir^{c,d}

^a Unidad de Trastornos del Movimiento, Servicio de Neurología, Hospital Clínico San Carlos, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain

^b Servicio de Neurología, Hospital Universitario Infanta Cristina, Parla, Madrid, Spain

^c Unidad de Trastornos del Movimiento, Servicio de Neurología y Neurofisiología Clínica, Instituto de Biomedicina de Sevilla, Hospital Universitario Virgen del Rocío/CSIC/Universidad de Sevilla, Sevilla, Spain

^d Centro de Investigación Biomédica en Red sobre Enfermedades Neurodegenerativas (CIBERNED), Spain

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Abstract

Introduction: Understanding the social and economic impact of Parkinson's disease is essential for resource planning and raising social awareness.

Development: Researchers reviewed the data published to date on epidemiology, morbidity and mortality, dependency, and economic impact of Parkinson's disease in Spain. In addition, a study has been carried out in order to define the public and private health care resources of Spanish patients affected by Parkinson's disease by means of an e-mail survey of all neurologists specialising in this disease and belonging to the Spanish Society of Neurology's study group for movement disorders.

Conclusions: The incidence and prevalence rates of Parkinson's disease in Spain are similar to those in the rest of Europe. According to current population estimates, there are at least 300 000 patients with Parkinson's disease and one new case per 10 000 inhabitants per year in Spain. This has a major impact on the patient's quality of life and nearly doubles patient mortality. In addition, the disease generates sizeable costs for the country that may exceed 17 000 € per year per patient; costs will rise due to the ageing of the population and the new therapies employed. Healthcare professionals and administrators dedicate their efforts to providing quality care to patients. Despite the above, we still have a long way to go in order to provide quality, efficient, multidisciplinary, and universal healthcare.

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* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: garciaramosg@yahoo.es (R. García-Ramos).

PALABRAS CLAVE

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Parkinson;
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Informe de la Fundación del Cerebro sobre el impacto social de la enfermedad de Parkinson en España

Resumen

Introducción: Conocer el alcance socioeconómico de la enfermedad de Parkinson es esencial para la planificación de recursos y concienciación social.

Desarrollo: Se ha realizado una revisión de los datos publicados hasta el momento sobre epidemiología, morbimortalidad, dependencia e impacto económico de la enfermedad de Parkinson en España. Además se ha llevado a cabo un estudio cuyo objetivo principal ha sido definir los recursos asistenciales públicos y privados que tienen los afectados por la enfermedad de Parkinson en nuestro país mediante una encuesta por mail a todos los neurólogos con dedicación especial a esta enfermedad, pertenecientes al grupo de Trastornos del Movimiento de la Sociedad Española de Neurología.

Conclusiones: La enfermedad de Parkinson en España tiene una incidencia y prevalencia similar al resto de Europa. Con la estimación de población actual se obtiene que debe haber en España al menos 300.000 pacientes con enfermedad de Parkinson y a al menos un nuevo caso por 10.000 habitantes año. Esta produce gran impacto en la calidad de vida del paciente y aumenta a casi el doble la mortalidad de los pacientes. Además supone un coste económico muy importante para el país, que puede llegar hasta más de 17.000 € anuales por paciente y que con el envejecimiento de la población y las nuevas terapias va a ir incrementándose. Los profesionales y administraciones realizan un gran esfuerzo para proporcionar una asistencia de calidad a los pacientes. A pesar de ello es mucho el camino que nos queda por recorrer para que una asistencia de calidad, eficaz y multidisciplinar sea universal para todos los pacientes con esta enfermedad.

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Introduction

The Spanish Foundation for the Brain was created to raise social awareness of neurological diseases and present the most accurate information to patients, family members, and non-neurological healthcare workers. It also aims to educate these groups, the media, social agents, and society at large not only about scientific topics, but also about health-related, social, professional, and family issues. In compliance with some of these objectives, the Foundation of the Brain prepares reports on the societal impact of different neurological diseases in Spain.

In our setting, Parkinson's disease is the second most frequent neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer disease.¹ It has a sizeable impact on the quality of life of both patients and carers from time of diagnosis. Society and health authorities alike are becoming increasingly aware of the need for quality specialist care for these patients, since patient management in such cases is complex and the treatment provided is crucial and may even change the prognosis over the long term.

With this in mind, the Foundation of the Brain has completed a report on the social implications of PD in which it presents what we know about the disease's epidemiology, morbidity and mortality, and economic impact, as well as care for these patients in Spain.

Development

Epidemiology of Parkinson's disease in Spain

Estimates of the incidence and prevalence of degenerative diseases, such as PD, are important not only as epidemiological information, but also in resource planning. Prevalence and incidence estimates for PD worldwide vary from study to study. This is mainly due to methodological differences, but genetic and environmental factors are also present in the different populations that have been studied. From a methodological viewpoint, the main differences are due to differing diagnostic criteria, the age of the study population, and the case selection methods.

PD is diagnosed clinically since it has no biomarkers.² The most commonly used clinical criteria were drawn up by the United Kingdom Brain Bank.³ While clinicopathological validation studies are scarce, one series of 100 patients clinically diagnosed with PD⁴ found that only 75 met pathology criteria for that disease. Another more recent study⁵ found a better ratio at 72:79, indicating improved awareness among doctors performing the diagnosis. Out of all clinical data, asymmetry and response to levodopa are the most discriminatory in a differential diagnosis of PD and other types of parkinsonism.⁶ 'Door-to-door' studies provide the best methodology for identifying cases; in these studies, all

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