

April is Parkinson's Awareness Month –



Parkinson's disease (PD) is a chronic, neurological disease, commonly referred to as a *movement disorder*. It is caused by a loss of dopamine producing cells in the brain. Classic *motor* symptoms of PD include tremor during rest, stiff limbs, slowness of movement, and gait and balance problems that progress over time.

Non-motor symptoms, such as sleep disturbances, urinary dysfunction, constipation, swallowing problems, mood disorders, and cognitive deficits, can occur as well. There is currently no cure for PD, however, many effective medications and treatment options, including surgery are available.

The Parkinson's Disease Research Education and Clinical Center (PADRECC) at McGuire VAMC is making a difference for Veterans and their families with Parkinson's Disease. PADRECC was founded in 2001 when the Department of Veterans Affairs created six specialized centers nationwide designed to serve the estimated 80,000 veterans affected by PD and related movement disorders.

Richmond, Virginia was chosen as the PADRECC site to serve the Southeast region of the United States covering VISNs 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. We provide state-of-the-art clinical and surgical care for veterans with movement disorders, along with education, research, and community outreach.

PADRECC Southeast team is a multi-disciplinary group that includes medical doctors specializing in neurology/ movement disorders, neurosurgery, and rehabilitation along with nursing, administrative, psychology, research, education personnel.

Clinical News and Surgical Interventions

- PADRECC is a sub-specialty of neurology. Primary Care providers and general Neurologists can **refer patients** with disorders involving movement, tremor, gait and balance problems. Or they may ask for a referral for surgery to evaluate patients for Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) surgery. **A consult or inter-facility consult (IFC) is required** for all PADRECC evaluations.
- **CVT (Clinical Video Telehealth) appointments** are available. PADRECC uses telecommunication technology to bring quality care for movement disorders to Veterans at distant or rural locations to minimize the burden of travel to Richmond. Currently, PADRECC is participating in the VHA Neurology Center of Excellence Pilot Project to increase the use of CVT in specialty services
- **DBS surgery** at Richmond uses the **frameless method**, a disposable guidance device developed by Dr. Kathryn Holloway. This frameless device replaced the traditional heavy frame and bone screw used in DBS. The frameless method enables greater patient comfort and participation during surgery.

Research News

- **Eye Movements** – this large study is researching specific eye movements in various movement disorders. Preliminary results suggest the ability to accurately differentiate typical movement disorders. Contact: G. Gitchel (804) 675-6300.

- **Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS)** – this research is examining the effectiveness of rTMS on speech in people with PD. TMS uses strong magnets to stimulate brain cells. Contact: M. Hirsch (804) 675-6284.
- **Requip XL**– this is a drug study using ropinirole prolonged release in patients with early stage PD or also s an adjunct treatment for advanced PD. Contact: P. Roberge (804) 675-5931.

Education

- **My Parkinson's Story** is a series of short videos prepared by PADRECCs that address various aspects of Parkinson's Disease. They have been recently approved by the VA for posting on YouTube and the PADRECC website. DVD's on the 2011 series are available.
- **PD Patient Education Brochures** were developed to provide information on the most common topics concerning PD. Available as tri-fold brochures hard copy or download from the PADRECC website.
- **Telehealth Parkinson's Education** (first hour of the monthly PD support group meeting in Richmond) – now being broadcast to Community Clinics (CBOCs) in Charlottesville, Fredericksburg and Emporia.

For more information:

- Contact Lynn Klanchar, PADRECC Education Coordinator **(804) 675-6952**
- **Visit PADRECC clinic, on hallway 2C** – bulletin boards and literature rack
- **National PADRECC Website** for more information: www.parkinsons.va.gov
- Stop by **Awareness Table and Display** for World Parkinson Day on Thursday, **April 11 from 10am-2pm** in the **McGuire VAMC Mall**