

PMRIG

PARKINSON'S MIDLANDS RESEARCH INTEREST GROUP

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

PMRIG is one of thirteen research interest groups (RIGs) supported by Parkinson's UK around the UK. The RIGs have a common aim, namely, to make PwP and their carers aware of the latest research and welfare discoveries about Parkinson's going on in the UK and all round the world. In making you aware of the latest research we hope to raise your spirits that new treatments to slow, stop or reverse Parkinson's progression are getting closer to becoming available in the clinic.

In expanding to cover the whole of the Midlands we hope to attract bigger audiences to the online and Face to Face research and welfare seminars we organise regularly, to our visits to Parkinson's Research Labs, etc. Also, we hope that expansion will result in more volunteers coming forward to join the steering committee to help run events. We urgently need a stronger female perspective on the steering committee. Please contact Liz Nash, our acting chair at lnash@parkinson's.org.uk for more information and to add names to receive this monthly newsletter which is distributed as Word and pdf formats. Note our updated logo.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Sign up to attend PAR-CON26 in person or online,
- Sign up to attend PUK's AGM,
- Register for the PMRIG seminar on Parkinson's and Motivation on October 26th,
- Sign up for any forthcoming webinars of interest and/or catch up on any seminars you have missed,
- Sign up for any trials that appeal,
- Read about the probiotic Symprove and its beneficial effects in Parkinson's and, if you have tried it, tell us if and how it has helped you,

1. PMRIG - RELATED EVENTS

1.1. 'HOW DO WE STUDY MOTIVATION IN PARKINSON'S?'

PMRIG hosts an online research event with time for questions and answers. Join us to hear about the Parkinson's research of Assistant Professor Romy Frömer and PhD student Thaleia Mouratidou at the University of Birmingham.

When: Monday 26 October 2026, 12 - 1pm

Where: Online via Zoom

Interested in attending? Register via [our Zoom registration page](#).

SUMMARY: *Motivation is crucial to people's health, wellbeing, and success. Thus, understanding its underpinnings is key to improving individual and societal life. An extreme lack of motivation is common in many conditions, including Parkinson's. It can negatively impact people's lives. In our lab, we study motivation and its impairments using gamified tasks as well as recordings of quickly changing brain activity using EEG. In our presentation, we will show you how we do the research in our EEG lab and we will tell you what we already know about motivation and the brain processes supporting it. We are currently studying why motivation is impaired in people with Parkinson's and would love to answer your questions about motivation and hear about your experiences*

1.2. PARKINSON'S UK ANNUAL MEMBERS ONLINE MEETING



When: October 1st, 4.45pm – 6.00pm

You are warmly invited to join us online at this year's Annual Members' Meeting (formerly called the AGM). This meeting is your opportunity to share your questions and thoughts directly with members of our board of trustees and executive leadership team.

[Click here to read the formal notice and agenda.](#) [Register for online attendance here](#)

To help us address what matters most to you, we encourage you to submit your questions ahead of the meeting by emailing governance@parkinsons.org.uk or by calling 0800 138 6593. We will respond to every question received, either during the meeting or afterwards in writing.

2. FORTHCOMING AND RECENT TALKS ABOUT PARKINSON'S

2.1. PAR-CON 2026

When: Friday 13 and Saturday 14 November 2026

Where: Online, and at The Vox Conference Venue, Resorts World, Marston Green, Birmingham B40 1PU (limited spaces).

Par-Con is your Parkinson's community convention about living well with Parkinson's. Planned in collaboration with a team of people living with and connected to the condition, Par-Con gives you the chance to learn from researchers, healthcare professionals and the wider community. Hear directly from trusted experts who can explain the latest research and opportunities, guide you through a new diagnosis or changes in your symptoms, and provide interactive sessions with tips to help manage your condition. Sign - up Fee to support the running of the event for in- person tickets Day 1 £15.00, Day 2 £10.00.

2.2. CHANGING THE GUT TO CHANGE PARKINSON'S: FAECAL MICROBIOTA TRANSPLANTATION (FMT).



WHEN: October 19th, 2026 at 19.30 (London time)

HOW: Online.

Speaker: Dr Arnout Bruggeman

The gut is an increasingly important topic of Parkinson's research because there is a complex relationship between the gut, the brain and the immune system. Results indicate that the microbiota of PwP differs from non-Parkinson's controls with more virulent species being present. Changes in the gut microbiome may contribute to Parkinson's and the way Parkinson's develops.

Faecal Microbiota transplantation (FMT), the transfer of gut bacteria from a healthy donor to another person is an approach being studied to repair the microbiome of PwP. In this webinar the speaker will discuss what we currently know about the gut-brain axis in Parkinson's, what research into FMT is revealing, what clinical trials of FMT in Parkinson's have shown and how FMT might work. Dr Bruggeman is a movement disorders neurologist at Ghent University hospital, Belgium.

Register for this webinar: [here](#)

2.3. 'Power failure in the Brain - the mitochondrial basis of Parkinson's Disease'. The Edinburgh Parkinson's Lecture online. It was held on Tuesday, September 22nd.

The 2026 Edinburgh Parkinson's Lecturer was Prof Miratul Muqit. He is the inaugural Director of the UK Dementia Research Institute/Parkinson's Research Centre, based at the University of Edinburgh. His research group is world-renowned for making fundamental discoveries of how mutations in two genes – PINK1 and PRKN – leads to the accumulation of damaged mitochondria in brain cells. This has contributed to the development of targeted therapies designed to remove damaged mitochondria which have entered Phase 1 clinical trials for Parkinson's patients.

Listen to a recording of this lecture [here](#)

2.4. 'Parkinson's and dementia'

In this Cure Parkinson's webinar held on September 9th Prof Tilo Kunath was joined by an expert panel to discuss the two types of dementia most closely associated with Parkinson's, namely Parkinson's Disease dementia (PDD) and Dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB). The panel discussed what these conditions are, how they compare and the current research climate.

It is estimated that roughly half of people with Parkinson's will experience cognitive changes, the way we think and process information, to some extent; some of these individuals, however, may go on to develop dementia. Parkinson's belongs to a family of conditions called alpha-synucleinopathies, which are characterised by the build-up of abnormal copies of the protein alpha-synuclein. These copies clump together to form Lewy bodies, which disrupt how well cells can function. Although in Parkinson's this primarily impacts neurons in the part of the brain controlling movement, other areas of the brain may also be affected, leading to problems with thinking and memory.

Listen to this webinar again: [here](#)

2.5. How nutrition and simple kitchen strategies can transform symptom management for PwP

In this webinar interview held on September 8th, co-authors Dr. Michael Okun and Emily Truscott discussed their upcoming book, '**The Parkinson's Plate: A Health and Diet Guide to Manage Your Journey**'.

The authors blend medical expertise with straightforward nutrition strategies tailored for real kitchens. The discussion covered essential topics such as gut health, medication interactions, and simple, high-calorie recipes designed to respect the daily energy and time of people living with Parkinson's and their carers.

Listen to this talk again: [here](#)

2.6. THE MIND DIET MASTERCLASS: SCIENCE-BACKED BENEFITS FOR BRAIN HEALTH AND PARKINSON'S



Food is Medicine for Parkinson's (Part 7): The MIND Diet Masterclass.

The speaker explored the powerful connection between nutrition, brain protection, and physical mobility. The science of the Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) diet was described with specific, evidence-based foods that help slow cognitive decline and support

motor function scribed. Whether you are living with Parkinson's, caring for a loved one, or looking to optimize your neurological health, the speaker talked about practical, daily dietary strategies designed to protect your brain and keep you moving well. The talk ended with a valuable question session.

Listen to this useful talk via Parkinson's Insights: [here](#)

3. PARKINSON'S RESEARCH NEWS

3.1. PARKINSON'S INSIGHTS



The NoSilverBullet4PD and PD Buddy teams have joined forces to launch Parkinson's Insights, a collaborative platform created by PD Buddy and NoSilverBullet4PD. Their mission is to move you beyond the search for a "silver bullet" empowering you with the latest research and practical tools. This new website brings everything together in one place to help you stay informed and proactive.

Access Parkinson's Insights at [this link](#).

3.2. Research Commentary

'TO SYMPROVE, OR NOT TO SYMPROVE - THAT IS THE QUESTION'

The Editor asks: Do you get lots of emails offering the probiotic Symprove at a reduced price? I am inundated with them. The latest offer is 20% off if I tell them my Symprove story. Symprove is also discounted on the Parkinson's UK Shop site but you will need your PUK membership number to receive the discount. I had to phone PUK for my number-they found it in minutes via my post code.

But to the point – Symprove is a water-based suspension of 4 selected bacterial strains namely ***Lactobacillus acidophilus*** (NCIMB 30175), ***Lactiplantibacillus plantarum*** (NCIMB 30173), ***Lactocaseibacillus rhamnosus*** (NCIMB 30174), and ***Enterococcus faecium/lactis*** (NCIMB 30176). These four strains were chosen because they occur naturally in the healthy human gut, they have a natural structural tolerance to low pH levels **and** they work in strong biological synergy to cross-feed existing microbiome by producing **lactic acid** which is a crucial food source for the other "good" commensal bacteria already present in your gut. This cross-feeding process stimulates the gut bacteria to produce **short-chain fatty acids**, particularly **butyrate**, which strengthens the gut lining by improving epithelial tight junction integrity, eases gut inflammation and supports overall digestive health. When matched with Symprove's water-based delivery system which involves taking 70ml of the suspension daily 10 minutes before any food or drink to avoid getting caught up in the digestive process, these specific strains have been shown to bypass the acidic climate of the stomach and reach the gut unscathed.

There is evidence that Symprove is beneficial in IBS but for Parkinson's? In his plenary talk at the recent Parkinson's Midlands conference in Nottingham Dr David Dexter, Head of Research at PUK mentioned some published work indicating that taking Symprove could also be of benefit in Parkinson's. This research was reported in 2025 in the journal **Movement Disorders, Vol. 40, No. 12, pages 2710-2721 with the title *Effects of a Four-Strain Probiotic on Gut Microbiota, Inflammation, and Symptoms in Parkinson's Disease: A Randomized Clinical Trial***.

Editor's summary

The aim was to evaluate the effects of the liquid probiotic Symprove on gut microbiota, inflammation, motor and non-motor symptoms and constipation in a multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial. PwP and constipation were randomized (1:1) to receive either the probiotic (4.08 10⁸ CFU/mL) or placebo orally (70 mL/day) for 12 weeks. The primary endpoint was the differential abundance of gut microbiota taxa between baseline and end-of-treatment in the active versus placebo group. Secondary/exploratory endpoints included changes in inflammatory cytokine plasma levels, short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) plasma and faecal levels, motor and NMS outcomes after 12 weeks.

Results: *Between July 17, 2019 and February 6, 2022, 74 participants were randomized. Data from 35 (probiotic) and 33 (placebo) participants were analyzed. Enrichments of bacteria with beneficial health-related properties were observed in the active group compared to placebo. The proinflammatory cytokine TNF-α plasma levels decreased with probiotic treatment and increased with placebo. No changes in short chain fatty acid levels were observed. Reductions in time-to-on and NMS scale scores were observed only in the active group.*

Conclusions: *This probiotic was effective in beneficially enriching the gut microbiota with potential to reduce systemic inflammation, shortening time-to-on following levodopa administration, and alleviating NMS burden in PwP experiencing constipation.*

Editor comments: It should be noted that even though this trial only lasted 12 weeks some positive effects were noted even in this relatively short period of time. It is a pity that Symprove is quite so expensive but if it helps maintain a healthy microbiome and has anti-inflammatory effects it could be worth talking it over with your consultant. If you have used Symprove please share your experiences with us by emailing the editor at martin69747@gmail.com

4. PARKINSON'S RESEARCH TRIALS NEEDING VOLUNTEERS

4.1. RHYTHMIC 10HZ MEDIAN NERVE STIMULATION FOR THE REDUCTION OF PARKINSON'S TREMOR.'

Who is needed: 60 volunteers with a diagnosis of Parkinson's and a resting tremor in one or both hands/arms.

Where: Department of Psychology, University of Nottingham.

How: The trial involves 3 - 4 visits to determine how an active stimulation compares to a placebo stimulation. You will be randomly allocated into the active or placebo groups but volunteers in the placebo group will be able to try the active stimulation at the end of the trial. During the first visit researchers will deliver questionnaires to assess your symptoms, tremor and wellbeing. To assess your tremor, a short video will be taken of you and researchers will also give you an accelerometer device to take home for the duration of the trial. This measures your tremor frequency. At the second visit, you will repeat the questionnaires from the first visit and then receive one session of active or placebo stimulation. On your third visit, you will repeat the questionnaires given at the first and second visits. If you are in the

placebo group, you will have the opportunity to try the active stimulation during this third visit and be invited back for an additional session. You will also be asked to perform a simple movement task once during your first and last visit and twice during visits where you receive stimulation. The task involves tapping on circles on a screen as fast as you can. We will offer an inconvenience allowance of £10 per hour, and we will contribute up to £45 per visit to help you with travel expenses for your visit to the University of Nottingham.

For further information about this work please email the following: Mairi.Houlgreave1@nottingham.ac.uk

Editor: There is no closing date for recruitment, but more participants are still needed to reach the necessary total of 60.

4.2.TOP HAT - TRIAL OF A LICENSED DRUG AS A PARKINSON'S HALLUCINATION TREATMENT

Research teams across the UK are investigating if ondansetron has a meaningful treatment effect on Parkinson's and Lewy Body Dementia hallucinations. As this is an already licensed low-cost drug, if the research shows significant outcomes, ondansetron could be available for people with Parkinson's who experience hallucinations within the next few years.

Who is needed: 306 people diagnosed with Parkinson's or Lewy Body Dementia (LBD) who:

- experience visual hallucinations, see things that aren't there, at least once every week.
- are not taking apomorphine or any anti-psychotic medication.
- and have been taking a stable dose of Parkinson's or LBD medication for 28 days before starting the research.

Where; At Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, **Kings Mill Hospital**, Sutton In Ashfield, NG17 4JL, near Mansfield. (Plus a number of other sites around the UK)

What's involved? If you are eligible to take part, you will either receive ondansetron or dummy medication tablets for 12 weeks, which will be shipped to you via a courier. The research team will maintain regular contact throughout to take assessments and let you know how much medication to take. This contact will be through telephone, video call, and face-to-face. 3 face-to-face visits are required and, for some research sites, home visits may be an option.

For more information: contact the TOP HAT team at o.zubko@ucl.ac.uk or call 02031089073 and leave a voicemail message. More information is also available on the Parkinson's UK website: [here](#).

Hear about Maria and Desmond's experience of taking part in the TOP HAT trial
"I'd really encourage anyone thinking about it to take part. It was so easy, just one more pill. Read more about Maria and Desmond's experience in the trial online [here](#).

Parkinson's Research (JPR@Research+Me) is a UK-wide online registry that makes it easier for people with Parkinson's to get involved in research. What does it do? A secure sign-up process will collect information from interested people with Parkinson's, so that they can be matched with relevant studies and receive regular newsletters about new trials and research opportunities

Details of trials supported by Parkinson's UK and Cure Parkinson's are given in the links below for you to consult if interested. Don't forget that by volunteering you may be consenting to your email being shared with the researcher(s) involved in the project.

CURE PARKINSON'S/PARKINSON'S UK JOINT 'GET INVOLVED IN RESEARCH' LEAFLET.

Cure Parkinson's and Parkinson's UK have put together a co-branded leaflet with a number of ongoing opportunities to get involved in research for people with Parkinson's in the UK - [click here](#) to access the leaflet.

Sign up using this link to receive the CURE PARKINSON'S Research News: <https://cureparkinsons.org.uk/newsletter/>.

PARKINSON'S UK RESEARCH SUPPORT NETWORK. This site advertises other trials needing volunteers. So click on the [Take Part Hub](#) on the Parkinson's UK website to find other research projects needing volunteers.

BEECHBAND NEWS

Besides Symprove I am getting regular messages about the BeechBand. Issue 08 appeared in my inbox a couple of weeks ago. This is probably because I tried early models of the BeechBand when it was first introduced. for the

Newsletter comments, queries, corrections, arguments, and submissions to the Editor (Martin Rumsby) at: martin69747@gmail.com. If you have any top tips for coping with your Parkinson's, special diets, exercise regimes, etc., that you would like to share with us in this Newsletter, email the editor. Any mistakes in the details above are entirely the fault of the Editor!



We're here to support every Parkinson's journey, every step of the way.

Thanks: The Editor greatly appreciates help from Mia of the PM-RIG steering group with help in proofreading this newsletter and with shortening long links.

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