

Explaining Parkinson's

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Useful Addresses

Appendix one.

Medication Logs

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Explaining Parkinson's Introduction

A good deal has been written about Parkinson's over the years, and there are many avenues through which information about the condition can be obtained. Throughout this book, I will be referring to various organisations that play a major role in providing invaluable information about Parkinson's disease.

My own background is non-medical so it should be understood from the outset that what you read in this book is in no way based on medical opinion, it is just a product of research and personal experiences. My personal experiences have involved my partner's relatives and very close friends of mine and I have been deeply involved in all aspects of Parkinson's from initial diagnosis to living with Parkinson's and medication and ongoing needs and support.

In addition to this, I myself was diagnosed mistakenly with Parkinson's disease by my doctor (although I hasten to add this was an initial diagnosis and he referred me to a specialist who, after a few months of tests, and a deep brain scan, informed me that I did not in fact have Parkinson's). What this little episode did was take me through the initial phase of trauma and then acceptance that I might have Parkinson's disease. It was the culmination of all these experiences that prompted me, with the aid of my partner, to write this book.

What is Parkinson's?

Parkinson's is (one of) the most common disorders of the nervous system. Muscle movements are affected with the main

symptoms being tremors, stiffening of the muscles and, overall, slower movement patterns. Parkinson's was first identified in 1817 by Doctor James Parkinson, working in London. Although the condition has been in existence for a very long time, it is now more prevalent because of the aging population, the fact that people are living longer. It is recognised most frequently in people of 60 or over, although it is also prevalent in some younger people.

Doctors are now far more aware of Parkinson's and the advances in drugs available to treat them have been very significant, particularly in the last decade. Research nowadays is focussed on slowing and preventing the progression of the condition and there will be corresponding advances in the types of medication available.

This brief book covers the diagnosis of Parkinson's, dealing with the condition in its early stages and explaining the condition to others, choosing the most effective medication for you, choosing diet and putting together an exercise regime, a discussion of surgical options and also the financial aspects of Parkinson's such as benefits and employment. There is a section about people who care for those with Parkinson's and many useful contacts.

Initially, a lot of medical terminology is used and I do my best to elaborate on the meanings of various terms. I sincerely hope that you will benefit from this brief but nonetheless important and informative book .