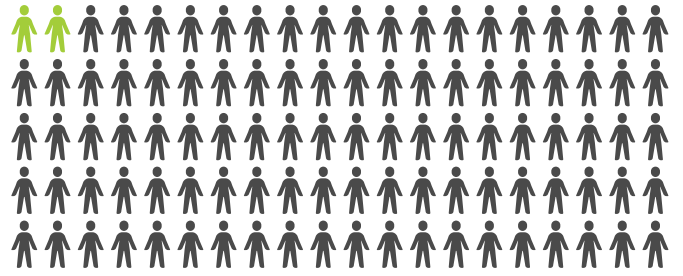
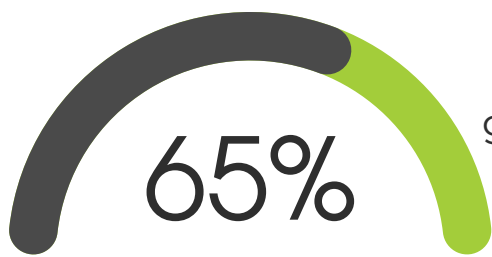


Young-Onset Parkinson's Disease (YOPD)

Young-onset occurs when one is diagnosed with Parkinson's disease before the age of 50 years. Usually, diagnosis occurs at 60 years of age and tends to be idiopathic Parkinsonism but can be diagnosed at ages younger than 40 years.



20,000 out of a million Parkinson's patients were diagnosed before the age of 40 years old.



65% of patients under 20 years old have a genetic mutation increasing their risk of developing Parkinson's disease

Younger onset = higher possibility of genetic mutations

Early symptoms of young-onset patients include dystonia (muscle stiffness or cramping) such as the arching of the foot, dyskinesia (involuntary movements), and fewer cognitive issues.

Some believe that it is better to have Levodopa early on to control symptoms and have a better quality of life as the patient will stay active for as long as possible, while others believe it should be started later on to delay side effects of the drug

Young-onset patients usually have milder symptoms as the disease progresses, allowing them to have fewer functional and cognitive impairments early on. Younger patients have higher brain neuroplasticity (the brain's ability to modify its synaptic connections) in response to therapies, allowing the brain to respond differently. However, young-onset patients may face increased side effects from dopaminergic medications.

Young-onset can be difficult as patients may have additional life responsibilities at their age, such as their careers. However, early onset has shown better outcomes for surgeries and medical innovations as patients may have fewer age-related issues.

Early signs of Parkinson's disease include:

- Slight tremors when at rest
- Loss of smell to certain foods
- Small or crowded handwriting
- Sudden movements when sleeping
- Stiffness in limbs when moving
- Constipation
- Softening or hoarsening of voice
- Inability to express facial expressions
- Dizziness when standing up
- Stooping or slouching posture when standing



Things to Remember:

- Get as much information as you can using credible sources
- Know that symptoms vary from person to person
- Understand that this is a chronic rather than terminal disease
- Reach out for support from friends and family
- Build a team of specialists and therapists (e.g., physiotherapists, occupational therapists)
- Take a genetic test if the patient is planning to get pregnant
- If the patient is taking birth control, the doses need to be adjusted in accordance with PD medications. Therefore, patients should consider alternative contraceptives as well.