

PARKINSON'S DISEASE



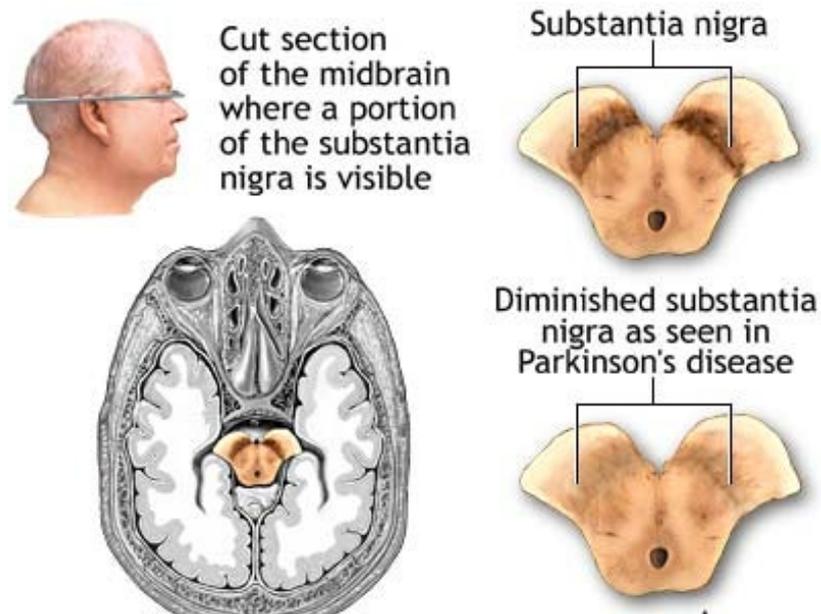
Chinese character for “longevity” (*shou*)

Giovanni Maciocia

PARKINSON'S DISEASE

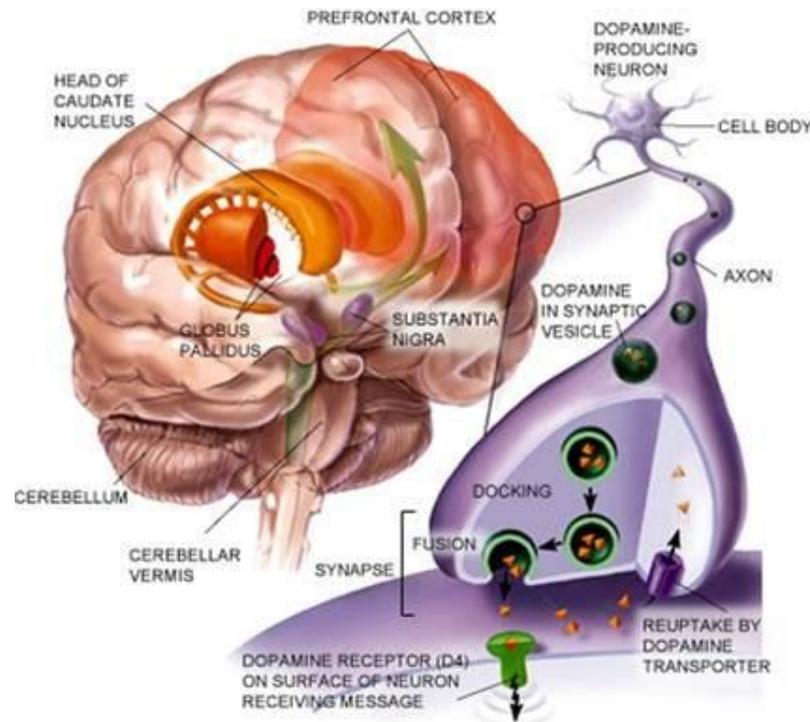
Parkinson's disease is a clinical syndrome characterized by impairment of movement, rigidity and tremor, which results from damage to the basal ganglia.

Its pathology consists in cellular loss and depigmentation of the substantia nigra. This is accompanied by biochemical changes in the corpus striatum where there is a decrease of dopamine.



In Parkinson's disease there is an imbalance between these two neurotransmitters, with a decrease in dopamine accounting for the impairment of movement, and an increase in acetylcholine accounting for the rigidity and tremor.

The substantia nigra and corpus striatum are connected by fibers where dopamine and acetylcholine act as neurotransmitters.



The onset of the disease usually occurs between the ages of 50 and 60. The first sign is usually a tremor of the hand. It is a coarse tremor 4 to 8 times per second. Difficulty in movement and rigidity follow the onset of tremor.

The face also loses its expressive movements, giving the patient the typical staring look which is diagnostic of this disease.

Automatic swinging of the arms when walking is decreased or lost and the patient walks taking small shuffling steps. The handwriting becomes progressively smaller.

Primary motor symptoms

Resting tremor, slow movement (bradykinesia), decrease in facial expressivity, rigidity, postural instability, leaning forward.

Secondary motor symptoms

Freezing of gait, micrographia, mask-like expression, unwanted accelerations (“festination”).

The tremor of Parkinson's disease is coarse while that of thyrotoxicosis or alcoholism is finer and more rapid.



Additional secondary motor symptoms include:

Stooped posture, a tendency to lean forward

Dystonia

Impaired fine motor dexterity and motor coordination

Impaired gross motor coordination

Poverty of movement (decreased arm swing)

Akathisia (a feeling of inner restlessness, constant motion)

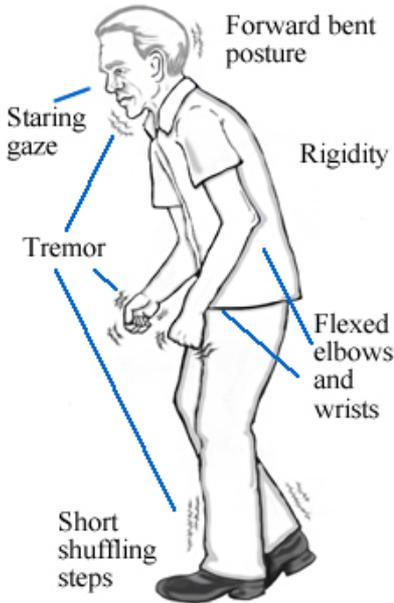
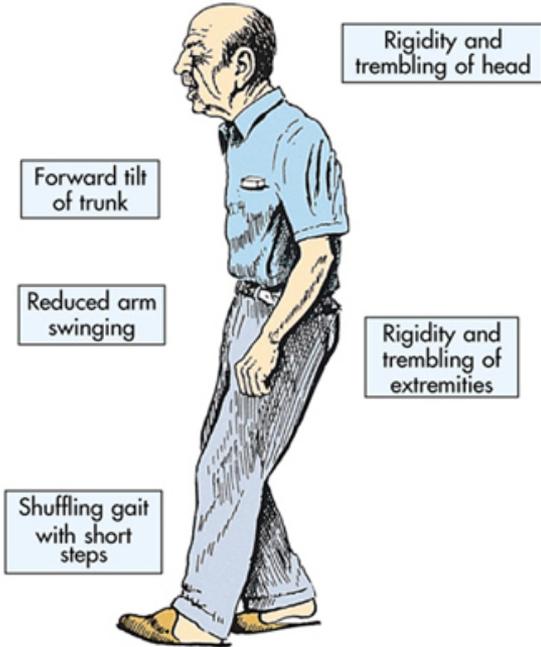
Speech problems, such as softness of voice or slurred speech

Difficulty swallowing

Sexual dysfunction

Cramping

Drooling



In Chinese medicine, Parkinson's disease comes under the disease-symptom of “Tremors” (*Chan Zheng*) and is always related to Liver-Wind.

The “Principles of Medicine” (1565) says:

"Wind tremors are [caused by] Wind entering the Liver and the Qi of the channels rebelling upwards, this causes tics of the face and tremors of the limbs."

The “Original Theory of Medicine” (Ming dynasty) says:

“Tremors may be caused by: deficient Qi unable to attract fluids and Blood towards sinews and channels to nourish them;

deficient fluids and Blood not nourishing the sinews;

Phlegm-Fire obstructing the channels and sinews so that fluids and Blood cannot nourish them;

deficient Yuan Qi facilitating the invasion of pathogenic factors in the channels so that Blood cannot nourish sinews and channels.

Although there are many different causes, in all of them there is a deficiency of fluids and Blood not nourishing sinews and channels.”

The discussion of Parkinson's disease will be conducted according to the following topics:

1. Aetiology

- a) Overwork
- b) Diet
- c) Emotional stress

2. Pathology

3. Acupuncture in the treatment of Parkinson's disease

- a) Body acupuncture
- b) Scalp acupuncture

4. Identification of patterns and treatment

a) Liver-Blood deficiency generating Wind

b) Liver-Yang rising generating Wind

c) Liver-Fire generating Liver-Yang rising deriving from Liver-Yin deficiency

- Liver-Yang rising deriving from Liver- and Kidney-Yin deficiency
- Liver-Yang rising deriving from Liver-Blood deficiency

c) Wind

d) Phlegm-Heat agitating Wind

e) Qi and Blood stagnation, stasis in the Blood Luo channels

f) Liver- and Kidney-Yin deficiency

5. Prognosis and prevention

6. Modern Chinese literature

1. AETIOLOGY

a) OVERWORK

Overwork in the sense of working long hours without adequate rest for several years weakens the Kidneys and particularly Kidney-Yin.

