

News & Comments

Parkinson's Disease may be Detected by Bad Dreams

Victoria Mbachu

Parkinson's disease is twice as likely to be spotted in older adults who frequently have nightmares.

Most nights our brain spends fair amounts of time in the dream world, some of which are pleasant others are not. The phenomenon of nightmares is remembered by approximately 5% of people. In a rather interesting study recently, Dr Abidemi Otaiku and Academic Clinical Fellow in Neurology at the University of Birmingham found that, out of different neurological diseases, patients with Parkinson's disease have more frequent nightmares than normal.

To be precise, between 17-78% of Parkinson's patients have nightmares on weekly bases.

By analyzing the data of over 12 years from 3,818 older men the author observed that older adults who will later in life be identified with Parkinson's disease start experiencing bad dreams many years before the onset of typical symptoms of Parkinson's disease, like tremors, stiffness, and bradykinesia.

In addition, dreams may be a great source of information about the structure and function of our brains, which may prove to be an important topic for neuroscience research. Another important point to remember is that since Parkinson's itself is a very rare disease, so only 16 of the 368 men in the study developed the disease.

The lead author of the study is now planning to go a step further and identify the biological reason behind nightmares in people with Parkinson's by using electroencephalography. This way maybe one day, scientists will not only be able to treat Parkinson's but also bad dreams in such patients.

KEYWORDS

Dreaming, Parkinson's disease, nightmares, neurodegenerative disorders, nightmares, bad dreams

