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What is a “Movement Disorder Specialist” and why should PD patients see one?



Objectives :

01

Describe the basic function of a movement disorder physician .

02

Describe the scope of work of Movement disorder physician

03

Describe the reasons for seeing a Movement disorder physician

Describing the Basic function of a Movement disorder physician

→ *“Unequivocally that there are many superb general neurologists in the United States who treat PD patients with exemplary care. Many of you reading this are taken care of by such neurologists. Just because a neurologist has not undergone specialized movement disorders training, does not mean that they are not able to offer excellent PD care. Having said that however, those who do undergo extra movement disorders training and focus their practice on taking care of PD patients may have additional perspectives, especially in challenging clinical situations”.*

Describing the Basic function of a Movement disorder physician

Movement disorder physician is one who has completed residency in Neurology and has spent 1-2 years in movement disorder

As a movement disorder : one have good observation and clinical skills—seeing the patient, finding the pattern, and fitting them into the right category. Over time, once you’ve done it for a while, it becomes natural to see those specific disorders, which may not be so obvious for someone who’s not specifically trained in it

Other favorable traits include being able to enjoy logical thinking and fitting clues together, which is common to all neurologists.

Describing the scope of work of a movement disorder physician

Parkinson’s Disease is the mainstay for most people in this practice. Unfortunately, this disease has been on the rise. In fact, one in 37 patients is expected to have Parkinson’s Disease.

Parkinson’s disease affects many people, young and old, and there are different treatments, both medication and non-medical treatments. Parkinson’s affects not only the motor system but also sleep, mood, and other symptoms. So, this is an interesting area to study.

We do now understand that PD is a multisystem disease , as a movement disorder not only do, we address the movement aspects of the disease but also the non motor aspects of the disease.

Scope of work of a movement disorder physician

Other disease treated include	Huntington's disease	Dystonia
Tremor	Ataxia	Tics and Tourette's
Gait abnormalities	Balance disorder	

Scope of work of a Movement disorder physician.

Most common movement disorders span the whole spectrum of ages.

They see dystonia. They see Tourette's syndrome, which often affects children and teenagers.

Tremor can also be present in younger adults. Others would be genetic forms of movement disorders often presented in midlife.

Tremor and Parkinson's disease are especially common. It's generally easy to tell them apart, but not everyone behaves like a textbook example of the disorder—so it's not always black and white.

Scope of work of a movement disorder physician

Advise on the best practices

Advise on the best pharmacological practices

Introducing advanced therapies earlier than later

Discussing the best practices for surgical or non-surgical options

Discuss clinical trials available to patient

Scope of work of a movement disorder physician

- **Additional experience in prescribing PD-specific medications** – There are currently 22 medications approved for use in PD, including 7 medications containing levodopa, and 6 variations of dopamine agonists. These medications can be used in combination, and dosages and timing of all these medications can make a difference in clinical outcomes. It therefore takes skill and practice to use these medications most effectively.
- **Extra proficiency at managing medication side effects** – Many of the medications used for PD have side effects that need to be managed and a movement disorders fellowship allows for more training in managing these.
- **Added skill at non-motor symptom management** – Movement disorders fellowship allows for more comfort in managing non-motor symptoms such as depression, psychosis, constipation, and low blood pressure, including prescribing medications for these conditions.
- **Additional experience in botulinum toxin injections**, both for drooling as well as for limb dystonia that can accompany PD.
- **Training in deep brain stimulation (DBS) management** – Movement disorders training includes learning how to program the multiple DBS systems currently in use in the US. Trainees learn how to perform both the initial programming and/or iterations of the system as well as the ongoing adjustments of the system in response to disease evolution. Depending on the fellowship, a movement disorders fellow may also learn how to operate the neurophysiology equipment in the operating room during insertions of DBS, which allows for precise placement of the system in the brain.
- **Training in clinical trial methodology**, as well as recruitment for and conducting of PD clinical trials.

Reason you may consider to choose a movement disorder physician

Close relation with other specialties : psychology, physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.

Many centers, in fact, run special multidisciplinary clinics where they have a monthly clinic for Parkinson's or Huntington's disease. People can see multiple specialists at the same time.

This is very helpful in facilitating and streamlining care for the patient. It also helps to get input from multiple specialties on how to serve the patient best and work together.

Special opportunities outside of clinical medicine include different kinds of research.

Personal connections you develop with the movement disorder physician

Seeing this specialist early in your treatment could help you plan for your care in the future, prepare for potential changes in your Parkinson's and adapt to these changes as they happen

Reason you may consider to choose a movement disorder physician

Keep up on new developments in the field including newly approved medications. Movement disorders physicians will typically use these medications more frequently and be more familiar with their benefits and limitations.

Work alongside other health care professionals who have specialized knowledge of PD. These health care professionals may include nurses, social workers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech and language pathologists. These various professionals can then collaborate as a team to deliver the best results.

Have access to clinical trials. A Movement Disorders Specialist may be directly involved in conducting clinical trials and be able to refer patients to clinical trials at his/her own facility or may have knowledge of the available clinical trials in the area and be able to refer patients that are eligible to the appropriate trials at other institutions.

Have access to other Movement Disorders Specialists to discuss cases and share videos of complicated cases and clinical situations. These interactions provide new ideas and perspectives to allow for delivery of optimal care.

Tips and Takeaway

A Movement Disorders Specialist is a neurologist who has undergone an extra 1-2 years of PD-related training, known as a movement disorders fellowship and goes on to focus their practice on PD and related disorders.

A Movement Disorders Specialist may be especially adept at managing PD medications and side effects, managing non-motor symptoms of PD, administering botulinum toxin injections and programming DBS.

If you're currently seeing a neurologist and need a second opinion on something, or if you're at a point where you are considering changing doctors, seeking out a Movement Disorders Specialist might be something to consider.



*Thank you for your
attention*
