

Investigation of genetic and environmental determinants of Parkinson's Disease in the Cypriot population.

The Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics (CING), in collaboration with the St. George's Medical School, University of Nicosia, and neurologists from the public and private sector, implement the first Pancyprian research study on Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson's disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder worldwide and affects about 1-2% of the population over 65 years. The heritability of the disease has been estimated to be at least 27%, but many other factors are involved and influence the risk of developing the disease.

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that affect the risk of developing Parkinson's disease. The factors to be investigated are genetic / mutations in specific genes / and environmental including personal medical history, habits such as diet, smoking, physical activity, and consumption of coffee and alcohol.

The research study is based on recruiting patients diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease and a random sample of healthy controls from the Cypriot population for the control group. The criterion for participation in the study for Parkinson's patients is a definite diagnosis of Parkinson's disease by a neurologist, while the control group need to be people aged 45 years and older who reside permanently in Cyprus. Patient selection will be through neurologists, while the selection of healthy subjects will be random from the Cyprus population, based on postcode. Patients will be informed and invited to participate in the research by their doctor while the healthy will receive an invitation by mail. Participation in the study is voluntary.

Participants will be asked to answer a short questionnaire and give a small blood sample and / or saliva, to investigate their genetic material.

The results of this study will be of great importance for the scientific community and our population. Understanding the risk factors and the mechanisms involved in Parkinson's disease is the first step towards prevention, better and earlier diagnosis and more effective treatments for the disease.

This research project is co-funded by CING and from the Cyprus School of Molecular Medicine of CING. Also, the project has been approved by the National Bioethics Committee, which ensures data confidentiality of the participants. All data and samples will be stored encrypted and outcomes reported in populations rather than individuals. Finally, all data files will be preserved in strictest confidence, according to the " Law of personal data of 2001 ".

Should you be invited to participate in our study please do not hesitate to accept our invitation. Science is always dependent on human involvement.

For more information about the research study you may contact the coordinators:

- Dr. Eleni Zamba-Papanicolaou, Neurologist at CING, responsible physician and coordinator of the research project, Tel. (+357) 22392740
E-mail: ezamba@cing.ac.cy
- Dr. Christiana Demetriou, epidemiologist at CING responsible for epidemiological design, Tel. (+357) 22392774
E-mail: christianad@cing.ac.cy
- Dr. Alexander Heraclides, Assistant Professor at the Medical School St. George's, University of Nicosia, responsible for epidemiological and research planning
Tel. (+357) 22471964, heraclides.a@unic.ac.cy