THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION
FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

The Value of Controls in Clinical Research:

Why do PD studies need people who don't have PD?

People who do not have PD may be surprised to learn that they can take part in a PD clinical study. In fact, control subjects are essential to providing researchers with important information for comparison with people who have specific illnesses (in this case, PD). While recruiting control participants is critical to the success of these trials, it is often much harder than recruiting people with a disease, whose interest and motivation to be part of a study of their disease may be naturally high.

In many biomarker studies, data and samples collected from people with Parkinson's can be analyzed and fully understood only when compared to the same data and samples collected from people of similar ages and genders who do not have Parkinson's. By comparing information from people with and without the disease, research have a better chance of identifying differences between these two groups in biofluids (blood, urine, and spinal fluid), behavioral and clinical aspects involved in Parkinson's (such as sense of smell or cognitive function) and images of the brain. These differences ultimately lead to the discovery of a reliable and consistent biomarker of PD.

To learn more about participating in a clinical trial in Parkinson's disease, visit www.foxtrialfinder.org.