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Key Research Initiatives

Parkinson's Research: PPMI Clinical Study

PPMI is a landmark study launched by The Michael J. Fox Foundation in 2010 to deepen understanding of Parkinson's and find biomarkers disease indicators that are critical missing links in the search for better Parkinson's treatments.

Collecting and Sharing Parkinson's Information

Across 34 clinical sites in 11 countries, more than 1,500 participants — people with and without Parkinson's disease (PD) are completing clinical exams, undergoing brain scans and contributing biological samples in the pursuit of a cure. This information is providing new insights into PD for the PPMI research team. And a simple online system allows researchers around the globe to access study data and request samples for use in their complementary research. Scientists have downloaded PPMI data more than 1.7 million times, and the study has fielded more than 100 biosample requests. An \$80-million study, PPMI is sponsored by The Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF) and funded by the Foundation since 2010 in partnership with biotech and pharmaceutical companies.

We Will Find a Test for Parkinson's

Today, the tests doctors use to diagnose and monitor Parkinson's and researchers look to when measuring the impact of new therapies are far from ideal. These assessments are subjective — relying on clinical symptoms, which can vary and take months or years to progress. Objective, biological tests called biomarkers would transform patient care and help move research toward new treatments, allowing for:

- earlier diagnosis to avoid misdiagnosis and treat symptoms sooner or, one day, even prevent their onset
- better disease tracking to help patients and clinicians better manage a treatment regimen
- more efficient testing of new therapies to improve the odds of success and reduce costs and timelines to get more treatments to market

While the term *biomarkers* may be unfamiliar, you are likely familiar with biomarkers of other diseases, such as blood pressure for heart disease or glucose level for diabetes, commonly used by individuals and their physicians to identify risk of those diseases and monitor progression and treatment effects.

Read more about finding a test for PD

The PPMI Approach

MJFF has long championed biomarker discovery and development, having invested over \$28 million in biomarker research from 2000 to 2009. By that time, the Parkinson's research field had amassed enough biomarker leads and initial data to warrant the launch of PPMI, a comprehensive biomarker validation clinical study, in 2010.

Because PPMI is an observational study, its research volunteers do not take any experimental drug or placebo. Rather, they agree to undergo clinical assessments, contributing data and samples for five to 13 years (depending on their cohort). PPMI participants undergo a comprehensive battery of tests and assessments, including MRI and DATscan imaging; collection of blood, cerebral spinal fluid, and urine samples; as well as cognitive and motor evaluations. Monitoring changes in these areas in volunteers with and without PD over time will help researchers understand the progression of Parkinson's disease and potentially identify its biomarkers.

The rigorous standards established by PPMI study leadership for gathering, storing and analyzing data and biosamples have been adopted by other studies, allowing scientists to compare and learn from more people. In fact, PPMI is a cornerstone of multiple large-scale collaborations, such as the [Accelerating Medicines Partnership Parkinson's disease \(AMP PD\) program](#).

PPMI around the World

[embedded map of all PPMI sites]

PPMI Progress: 2010 to Today

By teaching us about disease, enabling partnerships and setting a standard for study design, PPMI is changing the way Parkinson's research is done.

- [Read the latest PPMI news on our Michael J. Fox Foundation blog.](#)
- [Look back at some of the major PPMI findings and initiatives in our regular participant newsletters.](#)
- [See a full list of scientific publications on PPMI data and biosample analyses.](#)

Get Involved

The success of PPMI depends on the contributions of its volunteers. PPMI is recruiting people with and without Parkinson's disease.

[Take the survey to check your eligibility](#)

Related Content

- [Participate in Research Your Role in Research](#)
- [Participate in Research Ways to Be Involved](#)

Be Part of the Answer

You have the power to impact your future and the future of millions living with Parkinson's disease. Explore clinical research participation today.

[Join a Study](#)



"I felt good contributing to something bigger than myself, hoping that I can play a small part in finding a cure for Parkinson's."

Jon Gilman
PPMI Participant

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