

Side effects of Parkinson's treatments you need to be aware of and what to do.

Let's keep it simple

Parkinson's drugs can cause side effects in a minority of users, and if not addressed quickly, the effects may be very significant. One of the side effects may be impulsive/compulsive behaviours.

It is important that if you or someone you know with Parkinson's begin to exhibit impulsive or compulsive behaviour, that steps are taken to try to address the matter immediately.

Although it is quite rare, it is not uncommon for people being treated for Parkinson's, particularly those taking dopamine agonist medication such as Ropinirole or Pramipexole, to show an abnormal interest in certain behaviours, some of which may be detrimental. Common examples are gambling (including online), hypersexuality, shopping - often in charity shops or online, overeating, or other compulsive behaviours. Compulsive/impulsive behaviour can be described as any activity which is overindulged with little concern for the consequences.

The risk is likely to be higher if a person has had any previous or existing addictive behaviour i.e. alcohol abuse, smoking, gambling etc.

Because compulsive behaviours can be similar to that of addictive behaviour, it can cause a person to feel rewarded by the action and this can lead to an increase in the behaviour and also sometimes to an increase in the use of the medication that drives this behaviour; thus creating a destructive spiral.

Because of the reward or pleasure experienced, someone exhibiting these behaviours may become more secretive in order to hide what they are compelled to do.

So family members and friends should be aware of changes to routine, secretive internet use or phone calls, over control or secrecy around finances, running out of medication too soon, etc.

Seeking early medical advice from a specialist and reducing certain medications under the guidance of a specialist, can usually reduce or eliminate such behaviour.

[Face2face Parkinson's C.I.C.](#)

[10 Charborough Road, Filton Park, Bristol BS34 7RA](#)

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Without early intervention, a minority of people may overspend and/or may overuse medication which could cause further problems for themselves both financially and emotionally.

Do not feel guilty or embarrassed if you experience problems like these. We respect how difficult admitting these problems around impulsive and compulsive can be. But by addressing the issue, you should improve your well-being and the well-being of those around you.

If you believe that you or someone you know may be experiencing compulsive or impulsive behaviour due to Parkinson's treatments; contact your:-

- Parkinson's Nurse,
- GP,
- Parkinson's Consultant,
- Parkinson's UK Helpline 0808 8000303
- Or see me in confidence- Kevin Carter - face2face.parkinsons@gmail.com

~~At Southmead Brain Centre Monday/Thursday 13:00—16:00~~

~~Or Cossham Hospital. Tuesday morning 09:30—13:00~~ **Due to **coronavirus**, these drop-ins are not available. Please contact me for further information.

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Kevin Carter - Independent Parkinson's Advisor February 2020