



COGNITIVE/BEHAVIOR WORKING GROUP of the PARKINSON STUDY GROUP

Introduction

Although most past clinical research on the treatment of Parkinson's disease (PD) has been concentrated on the motor aspects of the disease, cognitive and psychiatric manifestations are common and disabling features of PD. The Cognitive/Behavior Working Group (CBWG) of the Parkinson Study Group (PSG) aims to bridge this gap. The PSG has a well-developed research infrastructure and wide interdisciplinary membership across many institutions with diverse geographic locations and scientific strengths. Thus, the PSG, using the facilitation by the CBWG, is uniquely poised to advance clinical research on recognition, assessment, and treatment of cognitive and psychiatric manifestations of PD.

Goals of CBWG

To increase awareness of cognitive and psychiatric disturbances in PD within PSG, among clinicians, researchers, and funding agencies,

To provide a forum for the generation, development, execution, and dissemination of interdisciplinary clinical research studies that lead to improved treatments of the cognitive and psychiatric disturbances in PD, including single and multi-site trials and other clinical protocols, retrospective studies on existing databases ("data mining projects"), and review and position papers,

To foster the development of new investigators across multiple disciplines with expertise on cognitive or psychiatric aspects of PD and the related research,

To counsel appropriate PSG bodies (e.g., Executive Committee, Scientific Review Committee, Mentoring Committee, steering committees of clinical trials) and collaborate with other working groups of PSG on clinical studies that lead to effective treatments of cognitive and psychiatric aspects of PD.

Potential Scope of WG Activity on Cognitive and Psychiatric Aspects of PD

Examples of topics addressed by CBWG: Dementia, mild cognitive impairment (MCI), depression, anxiety, impulse control disorders (ICDs), hallucinations/psychosis

Project classification:

1. Interventional Trials:
 - a. Pharmaceutical
 - b. Non-pharmaceutical
 - i. Cognitive training
 - ii. Behavioral/social intervention
 - iii. Exercise
 - iv. Combined modalities

2. Non-interventional Studies
 - a. Retrospective
 - i. Secondary analysis of PSG databases (“data mining”)
 - ii. Analysis of external databases
 - b. Prospective (descriptive or experimental)
 - i. Epidemiology
 - ii. Clinical features (course, features, associated factors)
 - iii. Genetics
 - iv. Imaging
 - v. Pathology
 - vi. Experimental psychology
 - vii. Combined approach
 - c. Clinical practice parameters
 - i. Review/consensus panels for evaluation/development of assessment tools
 - ii. Review/consensus panels for treatment strategies

Examples of preliminary ideas for projects proposed by WG leadership:

- Clinical trials for PD-MCI using pharmaceutical (e.g., memantine) or behavioral (e.g., aerobic exercise, cognitive training) modalities, possibly integrating neuroimaging and biomarkers as secondary outcome measures.
- Clinical trials for depression and anxiety in PD using psychotherapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).
- Comparative study of cognitive rating scales for dementia in PD.
- Feasibility of Internet-based testing to screen for dementia and MCI in PD.
- Development of clinical screening instrument sensitive to early cognitive decline in PD.
- Exploration of the association of genetic features with cognitive and psychiatric disturbances in PD
- Clinical trial testing high dose (23 mg) donepezil in PD dementia
- Formation of panel to conduct a literature review that addresses mental health treatment interventions in non-mental health settings.

Procedures for Member Initiated Proposals

The procedures for application for PSG studies and for conduct of the approved studies are explained in the [PSG Constitution & Bylaws](#), Article X. All PSG proposals have to be reviewed by the Scientific Review Committee, and then a decision will be made by the Executive Committee, based on the recommendation of the Scientific Review Committee. However, before this formal stage is reached, the CBWG can act as a facilitator for the discussion and development of the project as a “pre-proposal”. CBWG leadership will periodically announce request for pre-proposals that can be submitted using a special form and be discussed with the interested WG members by e-mail, conference calls, and eventually during WG meeting during the annual PSG meeting. Article XII of the [PSG Constitution & Bylaws](#) explains the Publication Policies that result from PSG projects.

Ergun Y. Uc, M.D.
Chair

Kelvin L. Chou, M.D.
Co-chair

Laura Marsh, M.D.
Co-chair