

## **The Perioperative Experience of Parkinson's Disease Patients**

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Surgical patients with Parkinson's disease (PD) are at risk for experiencing significant postoperative complications ranging from an exacerbation of the PD symptoms such as increased rigidity, to the more serious complication of neuroleptic malignant syndrome. One explanation for these perioperative complications might be the withholding of PD medications prior to surgery; the majority of PD medication must be taken orally and some have a very short half-life. Patients with more severe PD may not be able to tolerate a delay in taking PD medications, with resulting symptoms occurring within minutes. Other than a few case reports, there has been no systematic investigation of the symptoms and experience of PD patients in the perioperative period. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to describe the perioperative experience of patients with PD. This study employs a descriptive design. Patients are contacted by telephone before or soon after surgery. Participants must be between the ages of 50-80 years, have a diagnosis of PD, and be scheduled for or have had non-PD surgery in the past year. By telephone, participants are screened, consented and evaluated with a modified Hoehn and Yahr staging tool. A semi-structured interview is scheduled for after surgery and is conducted in the participant's home. Three in-home interviews have been completed with a target sample of 25 participants. Recruitment, data collection, and data analysis are on-going. Studying the experience of PD patients during the perioperative period may provide new information that guides the development and testing of best practice guidelines for perioperative care.