WHAT DO I DO NOW?

SECOND EDITION

MOVEMENT DISORDERS

Richard A. Walsh
Robertus M.A. de Bie
Susan H. Fox

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Richard A. Walsh, MB, MD, MRCPI
Clinical Senior Lecturer in Neurology
Trinity College Dublin
Tallaght Hospital
Dublin, Ireland

Robertus M. A. de Bie, MD, PhD
Professor of Neurology
University of Amsterdam
Academic Medical Center
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Susan H. Fox, MBChB, MRCP(UK), PhD
Associate Professor Neurology
University of Toronto
Toronto Western Hospital
Toronto, Canada

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Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

First Edition published in 2013
Second Edition published in 2017

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Walsh, Richard A., 1978- , author. | Bie, Robertus M. A. de, author. | Fox, Susan H., author.
Title: Movement disorders / Richard A. Walsh, Robertus M.A. de Bie, Susan H. Fox.
Other titles: What do I do now?
Description: Second edition. | Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, [2017] |
Series: What do I do now? | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2016014241 (print) | LCCN 2016014861 (ebook) |
ISBN 9780190607555 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780190607562 (e-book) |
ISBN 9780190607579 (e-book) | ISBN 9780190607586 (online)
Subjects: | MESH: Movement Disorders—diagnosis | Movement Disorders—therapy | Neurodegenerative Diseases—complications | Neurodegenerative Diseases—therapy
Classification: LCC RC376.5 (print) | LCC RC376.5 (ebook) | NLM WL 390 | DDC 616.8/3—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2016014241

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed by Webcom, Inc., Canada

Movement Disorders

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SERIES CO-EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

Lawrence C. Newman, MD
Director of the Headache Institute
Department of Neurology
St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center
New York, New York

Morris Levin, MD
Co-director of the Dartmouth Headache Center
Director of the Dartmouth Neurology Residency Training Program
Section of Neurology
Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center
Lebanon, New Hampshire

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Preface

In this second edition of *What Do I Do Now? Movement Disorders*, we have added 14 new chapters and updated others that appeared in the first edition. The field of movement disorders remains one of the most exciting subspecialties within neurology, with continued advances in our understanding of the genetic and pathological basis for these diseases. While attempting to include some new themes to reflect these changes, the focus remains almost entirely clinical, with a pragmatic and practical approach offering solutions to commonly encountered problems. As before, we have aimed to keep chapters short and accessible, with 'high yield' information presented in an informal, problem-solving manner.

This book is suitable for general neurologists, trainees in movement disorders, as well as community and hospital-based general physicians who will encounter many of the more common and some of the rarer presentations included in this edition. Information provided is digestible and equally amenable to being carried in a white coat or used as a ready reference text in the clinic or office. We hope each time you dip into a chapter you come away with a clinical pearl or nugget that enhances your knowledge and your practice.

Contributors

Marina Picillo, MD
Researcher, Center for
Neurodegenerative Diseases
Department of Medicine and
Surgery, Neuroscience section
University of Salerno
Salerno, Italy

Susanne E. M. Ten Holter, MD
Department of Neurology
Medical Centre Haaglanden
The Hague, The Netherlands

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PART I

Parkinson's Disease

1 Smoothing out the Ups and Downs

Richard A. Walsh

You are reviewing a 63-year-old man with a diagnosis of idiopathic Parkinson's disease of 10 years' duration, treated for 8 years. He has had a relatively uncomplicated course to date, continuing to work at a bank, with no cognitive complaints and good tolerance of the dopamine agonist you had started him on 7 years ago. Four years ago, you added low-dose levodopa due to progression of his tremor that had become a nuisance at work, where colleagues, unaware of his condition, had commented on it. It had failed to respond to increasing doses of ropinirole. He is currently taking 18 mg ropinirole once daily and levodopa–carbidopa 100 mg/25 mg four times daily. He reports continued good "on" time where he feels he moves normally. His only new complaints are increasing weight, often snacking throughout the day, and a return of the right upper limb tremor 30 minutes predose. He is unaware of dyskinesia, but you note some mild dyskinetic movement of his right foot when animated.

What do you do now?

INITIAL MEDICAL MANAGEMENT OF MOTOR FLUCTUATIONS IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

It is sometimes helpful to use the analogy of a game of chess when explaining the approach to managing the motor complications of Parkinson's disease to newly diagnosed patients. I describe how the disease can be expected to change slowly as time goes on and the aim of the physician to outmaneuver it by being a few moves ahead at all times. We know this is possible because the emergence of motor complications tends to be reasonably predictable and almost an inevitability as years on therapy pass by. The analogy can be useful in helping patients understand the complexity and dynamic nature of their disease as well as preparing them for what will be many years of regular medication adjustments. This explanation can even be reassuring to patients who like to believe their doctor knows what to expect and has a number of treatment options to introduce when needed in the future.

THE THREE STAGES OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE

In simplistic terms, the natural history of the motor aspect of Parkinson's disease can be categorized into three main epochs, not all equal in duration:

1. The so-called "honeymoon period" is when motor symptoms respond well to dopaminergic therapy, allowing many patients to feel close to normal for much, if not all, of their day. This phase often includes treatment with a dopamine agonist in monotherapy but also the early stages of levodopa therapy in which the "long-duration effect" allows the benefit from individual doses to merge seamlessly together. This phenomenon is due to the buffering effect of surviving nigral neurons, which take up ingested levodopa and store it for later use well beyond its 90-minute plasma half-life.
2. After 5 or more years of levodopa therapy, most patients will experience motor complications, typically beginning with an awareness that the benefit of the first of three daily doses has faded by the time the next dose is due. This "wearing off" is characterized by a re-emergence of previously well-controlled symptoms. Dyskinesia may also be noticed for the first time, initially as subtle and nonbothersome choreiform movements, often unnoticed by the patient. Dyskinesia can be expected in 50% of patients after 5 years of levodopa therapy. A spouse may report a tendency to rock back and forth or dyskinetic neck movements coinciding with the peak effect of each or some doses of levodopa.

3. "Advanced" Parkinson's disease is a term sometimes used to describe patients who have had many years of disease and for whom motor complications (on–off fluctuations and troublesome dyskinesia) have become a prominent and constant problem. Patients in this stage of disease often have additional nonmotor and levodopa-unresponsive complications such as dementia and postural instability. The nondisabling wearing-off experienced in the earlier stages is replaced by sudden and unpredictable "off" periods, dose failures, delayed responses, and freezing. These severe motor fluctuations can leave patients experiencing brief islands of relatively good movement in a day otherwise marked by hours of disabling "off" time in which freezing, akinesia, and tremor can leave them fully dependent.

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE MANAGEMENT OF MOTOR FLUCTUATIONS

Listen to the Patient to Allow Treatment to Be Titrated to the Patient's Movement Requirements

A 40-year-old professional golfer with early onset Parkinson's disease will have very different expectations and requirements compared to an 80-year-old nursing home resident. This is not to imply that the older patient's needs are less important; however, for a patient largely confined to a chair or bed, the re-emergence of a moderate tremor for 1 hour before each dose may be tolerated, whereas in the golfer it clearly would not. It is also important not to change treatment just because you can do so. I always ask patients, "Would you be happy if I said your last week would reflect how you are likely to function for the next 12 months?" If they are broadly happy with this notion, I tend not to tinker with their pills for the sake of it. If they believe they have daily symptoms that adversely affect function on a social, professional, or recreational level, then I believe there is good rationale for a change.

Take the Time to Get an Accurate Picture of a Typical Day

When first questioned about their motor performance, patients with Parkinson's disease will often explain how yesterday was particularly bad or how their morning dose prior to clinic did not work as well as expected and provide their own interpretation of why this was the case. These are important issues for them of course, but isolated fluctuations may not always be representative of the larger picture. While acknowledging that day-to-day fluctuations occur, emphasize that what you need is an *average* picture of their day. With some help, most

patients will be able to provide a good outline of how long their "on" response tends to last with each dose and for what proportion of the day they are bothered by dyskinesia. With this information taken in a patient manner, it is far easier to make treatment changes. There will always be patients for whom motor fluctuations are so unpredictable that it is impossible for them to give a broad overview, and managing these patients can present a particular challenge. In the future, there will likely be increased use of automated technology that patients can wear on a wrist to give an automated and objective assessment of bradykinesia and dyskinesia.

Know When Less Is More

For the first 10–15 years of disease, the symptoms of Parkinson's disease are managed by the addition and layering of dopaminergic agents and enzyme inhibitors in an attempt to deliver a steady state of performance. Many patients will be treated with adjuvant agents such as anticholinergic drugs or amantadine for dyskinesia. As the condition progresses with an accumulation of cortical disease and the emergence of hallucinations and cognitive impairment, a measured retreat is often necessary to minimize side effects. Anticholinergics and amantadine are particularly poorly tolerated in patients older than age 70 years, and the improvement in what was believed to be disease-related cognitive decline can sometimes be dramatic once they are slowly withdrawn.

STRATEGIES FOR THE SECOND STAGE WHEN MOTOR COMPLICATIONS EMERGE

Motor fluctuations will not typically emerge for patients maintained on a dopamine agonist or monoamine oxidase B (MAO-B) inhibitor in monotherapy, or indeed in combination. As time progresses, the tendency is for additional dopaminergic therapies to be layered on to achieve an adequate motor response, and there are a number of options (Table 1.1) Ultimately, as was the case in this patient, it becomes necessary to add in levodopa when these less potent agents are not sufficient to manage symptoms or when side effects make dose increases a less attractive choice. Levodopa is typically started on a three-times-daily regimen, but over time the long-duration effect wanes, bringing on the wearing-off phenomenon. This early tailing off of individual levodopa doses can be managed by increasing the dose of a longer acting dopamine agonist being used or addition of a once-daily MAO-B inhibitor if not already in place. If these options are not available or not tolerated due to

TABLE 1.1 **Treatment Options for the Management of Motor Symptoms in Parkinson's Disease**

	Advantages	*Disadvantages*
MAO-B inhibitors Selegiline Rasagiline	Once-daily drugs Generally well tolerated	Small overall symptomatic response Selegiline can cause sleep disturbance, particularly when taken late in the day
Dopamine agonists Ropinirole Pramipexole Rotigotine	Available in once-daily or patch formulations, improving convenience and compliance Very low incidence of dyskinesia in monotherapy Can provide adequate symptom relief in monotherapy	Impulse control disorders are an increasingly recognized side effect Contribute to cognitive impairment and hallucinations in older patients Inevitably need bolstering with levodopa with disease progression
Levodopa/carbidopa	Most effective oral agent for symptom control Generally better tolerated than all other options	Contributes to genesis of dyskinesia Short-acting drug; multiple doses required with advancing disease Can also cause impulse control disorders and a greater cause of punding than dopamine agonists
COMT inhibitors Entacapone Tolcapone	Useful for maintaining duration of motor response with levodopa Generally well tolerated Available in compound preparation with levodopa	Can worsen previously nonbothersome dyskinesia Potential hepatotoxicity with tolcapone
Amantadine	Useful for reducing dyskinesia Mild antiparkinsonian effect, useful for some levodopa refractory tremor Worth trying for intractable freezing of gait	Poorly tolerated over the age of 65 years Commonly contributes to hallucinations
Anticholinergics	Can help otherwise refractory tremor	Poorly tolerated in older patients