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Parkinson's disease

Poor manual dexterity - difficulty opening bottles - blister packs can be impossible to open or tablets break.

Poor speech/swallowing difficulties - can be very difficult to understand due to low volume, stammer, excess salivation means they may not be able to ask all the questions they would like to. Ill fitting false teeth or shortness of breath swallowing problems may make taking medication difficult.

Poor short term memory - may forget to collect the prescription - will forget to take them - could get mixed up with which ones to take and take too many

Problems associated with Parkinson's disease

Poor mobility - can't get to the pharmacy or GP - so may not be on optimum treatment, can't get up to take meds if out of reach or have left things a little late.

Immediate release, controlled release, dispersible what is the difference, why are they used and when

Lack of knowledge/understanding - some patients have no idea what they are taking or why.

What Can you do to help

Find out who collects the Medication

Discuss the problems they have coping with their condition

Think practically -

How does their PD affect them - can they get tablets out of a blister pack - how many of you have sat with a patient and watched them try - can they turn a dosette box over do they have the dexterity to only break one seal - can they get through the child proof

Looking for solutions

Are collection services available- this could be used to monitor compliance, are they running out before their due date, are tablets left in the box (missed doses) if so how many and how often. Why are they being missed?

Labelling - many drugs are labelled take as prescribed, or five daily - taken with or after food with no explanation as to why - what can be taken with what and what should be separated and by how long.

Solutions continued

Timing of medication - 5 times daily means anything
- by understanding how and why the drugs work will help the patient decide how to take them

How do they remember - timed pill boxes - simple alarm clocks - mobile phones - numbered/timed single dose bottles or tubs - medi dose boxes

Access - can they swallow - can they get the tablet out of the bottle blister pack/bottle

Are drugs available in liquid/dispersible options

Solutions continued

Tablet bottles - size and type of bottle can the patient grip it - can they get the lid off - is the drug suitable to be dispensed in alternative containers

Drug interactions - do all the drugs mix - if not why not

This is the 3rd prescription for a ropinirole starter pack - should we not question this

Solutions continued

If you are changing the manufacturer and the look of the tablet explain this to the patient.

When using parallel imports can the patient dispense the tablet through the label you need to stick on the back.

Would personal medication cards be of use

Conclusion

The more our patients understand their drug therapy how and why it works, when and how to take it the better their symptom control.

You can be instrumental in ensuring medication is taken on time and in the correct order. Not all PD patients have access to a PD nurse or GP who knows enough to fully support them.