

DOCTOR'S ALERT! Impulse Control Disorders

Serious behavioural disturbances can be a side effect of Parkinson's medication

Certain Parkinson's disease (PD) medications such as dopamine agonists and even levodopa may result in loss of impulse control and disinhibition, leading to the following alarming behaviours:

- Pathological gambling (casinos, lotteries, internet, etc.)
- Hypersexuality (intrusive sexual thoughts, urges or remarks, inappropriate or offensive behaviours)
- Impulsivity Compulsive activities (shopping, overeating, internet use)
- Preoccupation with a behavior or mood state
- Overuse of medications (inappropriate and excessive use of anti-parkinson medications, tolerance and psychological dependence)

Individuals diagnosed with Parkinson's may not be aware that such inappropriate behaviour is potentially disastrous. Ask directly if there are any problems.

The Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre, at UBC, advises as follows:

- Treatment for these risk-taking behaviours will involve medication adjustments and counselling.
- Treatment usually begins with a reduction of dopamine agonist medication. All medication adjustments should be initiated by a physician offering sub specialized care, as Parkinson's may deteriorate.

A diagnosis of Parkinson's changes the lives of individuals and their families.

If you have patients with Parkinson's, refer them to us.

We are here to help.

Parkinson Society British Columbia

600 – 890 West Pender Street. Vancouver, BC V6C 1J9

604 662 3240 | 1 800 668 3330 | www.parkinson.bc.ca



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