

Talking About OFF Episodes: A Guide to Help Your Patients Uncover Their OFF Symptoms



OFF episodes may limit people with Parkinson's disease in varying ways

Patients with Parkinson's disease (PD) may experience re-emergence or worsening of their PD symptoms associated with OFF episodes at any point in the course of their disease.¹ Diagnosis of OFF episodes may be complicated by the heterogeneity of OFF symptoms, which can vary both within individual patients and among patients.²

Identifying symptoms of OFF episodes

Openly discussing specific OFF symptoms during OFF episodes and frequently asking direct, proactive questions may help identify patients who are experiencing OFF episodes.³⁻⁵ Patients should be routinely asked about OFF episodes in the outpatient, inpatient, and skilled nursing settings.⁶

Make non-motor symptoms part of the conversation

Non-motor symptoms⁷:

- Are common in patients experiencing OFF episodes
- May be more problematic than motor symptoms

Non-motor symptoms can include a wide range of autonomic, sensory, and cognitive symptoms; however, recognition of non-motor complications can be difficult.³⁻⁵ Questioning patients directly about non-motor symptoms can help identify OFF episodes.³⁻⁵

Asking about OFF episodes

Here are some examples of open-ended, probing questions you might ask to help elicit a more complete clinical picture of your patients' OFF episodes.



about their ON periods

(when patients are experiencing a usual response to medications)⁸

- What does your best "ON" feel like?
- During which periods of the day do you feel your best "ON?"
- Do you typically plan your activities around the times you feel "ON"?

how their PD medication is working

- Before your next dose is due, do your other symptoms come back?
- First thing in the morning, are you stiff and slow?
- Is your response to your PD medication the same throughout the day?
- Are you taking your medication because the clock says it is time? Or do your symptoms prompt you to take your medication?

about non-motor symptoms

Ask questions about cognitive and behavioral non-motor symptoms, such as:

- Do you feel tired, anxious, or depressed?
- Do you experience mood swings or sudden/intermittent confusion?

References

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