

## **EuroPa: A European network for clinical research of Parkinson's disease**

The EuroPa consortium\*

Clinical centers from eleven countries have joined together to form the European Cooperative Network for Research, Diagnosis and Therapy of Parkinson's Disease (EuroPa). The establishment of the network has been funded for 3 years, until December 2004, by a grant from the European Commission. EuroPa aims to constitute a European clinical research organization that will initiate, plan and conduct multi-center clinical trials and studies in Parkinson's disease (PD). These will include projects driven both by members and by industry. All participants are experienced clinical researchers and by bringing together their expertise and setting up a common infrastructure clinical research in the field of movement disorders will be advanced.

An essential part of the network is to create a registry of patients with Parkinson's disease. Comparable clinical data from each patient will be collected, based on a common minimal data set. A central database is combined with web-based data capture, i.e. data entry and management is done via the Internet. Patient data is transmitted and stored pseudonymized. Participation by all patients is on a voluntary basis. The registry will allow access to patients who fulfill particular diagnostic criteria and will facilitate efficient recruitment for future PD studies. It will also support research projects in 'cost of care' and 'quality of life' studies across Europe.

As it develops EuroPa faces a number of challenges. For example, the funding strategy of the European Commission primarily focused on the network infrastructure. Little provision was made for personnel involved in patient recruitment, data entry and management. Despite this, centers are currently recruiting a representative sample of patients in their PD outpatient clinics and the registry is growing. The working structure of the clinical research organization has been developed. EuroPa will select its first study this year. Within the 3 years EuroPa must identify effective measures to ensure its sustainability beyond the initial funding period. Potential options for future funding are under evaluation. It is anticipated that when future funding is secured the network's scope could be extended to include additional movement disorders and new centers.

The expansion of EuroPa offers an opportunity not just to increase the number of study patients and research projects but also to support the spread of evidence based medicine for Parkinson's disease in all participating countries.

More information on the EuroPa project is available on the Internet at [www.europarkinson.net](http://www.europarkinson.net)  
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