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Loneliness Increases Risk for Incident Parkinson Disease

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FRIDAY, Oct. 6, 2023 (HealthDay News) -- Loneliness is associated with the risk for incident Parkinson disease (PD), independent of other risk factors, according to a study published online Oct. 2 in *JAMA Neurology*.

Antonio Terracciano, Ph.D., from Florida State University College of Medicine in Tallahassee, and colleagues assessed whether loneliness is associated with the risk for incident PD and whether the association is independent of other risk factors or modified by age, sex, and genetic vulnerability. The analysis included data from 491,603 participants in the U.K. Biobank followed for 15 years.

The researchers found that individuals who reported being lonely had a higher risk for PD (hazard ratio [HR], 1.37; 95 percent confidence interval [CI], 1.25 to 1.51), an association that persisted even after accounting for demographic factors, socioeconomic status, social isolation, PD polygenetic risk score, smoking, physical activity, body mass index, diabetes, hypertension, stroke, myocardial infarction, depression, and ever seeing a psychiatrist (fully adjusted model: HR, 1.25; 95 percent CI, 1.12 to 1.39). Sex (HR for interaction, 0.98; 95 percent CI, 0.81 to 1.18), age (HR for interaction, 0.99; 95 percent CI, 0.98 to 1.01), and polygenic risk score (HR for interaction, 0.93; 95 percent CI, 0.85 to 1.02) did not moderate the association between loneliness and PD. In the first five years, loneliness was not associated with the risk for incident PD (HR, 1.15; 95 percent CI, 0.91 to 1.45) but it was associated with PD risk during the subsequent 10 years (HR, 1.32; 95 percent CI, 1.19 to 1.46).

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"The findings add to the evidence that loneliness is a substantial psychosocial determinant of health," the authors write.

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