

Industrial chemical used by workers linked to Parkinson's

Parkinson's disease may be more common among industrial workers in Pennsylvania and the U.S., according to a recent study. Researchers reported that workers exposed to industrial solvents have an increased risk of developing Parkinson's disease.

Researchers studied sets of twins where only one twin had Parkinson's disease. The twins were questioned about their work history and hobbies. The study found that individuals who were exposed to trichloroethene (TCE) and other solvents had a six-fold increased risk of developing Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson's disease can cause limb tremors, muscle stiffness, slower movements and speech impairment.

The study found that there was roughly 10 to 40 years between TCE exposure and individuals being diagnosed with Parkinson's. Researchers stated that this may mean that exposure to TCE may trigger the degenerative disease but it may take a significant amount of time before any symptoms of the disease are seen.

TCE is a very dangerous chemical. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently declared TCE as carcinogenic to humans. TCE was a common solvent used in dry-cleaning solutions, adhesives, paints and carpet cleaners. TCE is still regularly used as a degreasing agent and can contaminate drinking water.

The study also looked at other solvents, mainly perchloroethylene, which was commonly used in dry cleaning and degreasing agents, and carbon tetrachloride, which was commonly used to manufacture chlorofluorocarbon refrigerants. Exposure to these solvents also significantly increased the risk of Parkinson's disease.

This was the first study which showed a direct link between these types of solvents and an increased risk of developing Parkinson's disease. While many of these solvents are no longer used in the workplace, it is important for workers to be aware of the dangers of working with these types of chemicals that may increase the risk of Parkinson's disease as well as cause cancer.

Source: Natural Health Research Institute, "[Trichloroethylene Solvent Exposure May Increase the Risk of Parkinson's Disease](#)," Marcia J. Egles, Sept. 24, 2012

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