

2 rheumatoid arthritis drugs tied to lower risk of Parkinson's

January 28 2022



(HealthDay)—Two rheumatoid arthritis drugs show potential for

lowering the risk of Parkinson's disease, new research shows.

Some previous studies have found that people with rheumatoid arthritis have a lower risk of Parkinson's, and it was suggested that a class of rheumatoid arthritis drugs called disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) may play a role in that reduced risk.

To learn more, researchers analyzed data from thousands of patients in Finland.

The use of most DMARDs—including [methotrexate](#), [sulfasalazine](#), gold preparations or immunosuppressants—at least three years before Parkinson's disease diagnosis was not associated with the risk of the disease in those with rheumatoid arthritis, according to the study published online Jan. 21 in the journal [Neurology](#).

However, the researchers did find that rheumatoid arthritis patients who took the DMARDs [chloroquine](#) or [hydroxychloroquine](#) had a 26% lower risk of Parkinson's disease.

Both of these drugs affect the [immune system](#) and have been shown to have anti-Parkinson's potential in animal studies, according to the researchers. But results of animal studies are often different from those in humans.

The new study was led by Anne Paakinaho of the School of Pharmacy at the University of Eastern Finland in Kuopio.

Her team called for further investigation of the drugs' possible protective effects against Parkinson's.

The study—funded by the [Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research](#)—controlled for length of time with rheumatoid arthritis, age,

sex and other [health conditions](#), such as [heart disease](#) and diabetes.

The [risk factors](#) for Parkinson's [disease](#) are unclear, the study authors noted in a journal news release.

Previous studies have linked rheumatoid arthritis with Parkinson's. But they have yielded conflicting findings, with [rheumatoid arthritis](#) being associated with either a lower or higher risk of Parkinson's.

More information: The Parkinson's Foundation has more on [Parkinson's disease](#).

Anne Paakinaho et al, Disease-Modifying Antirheumatic Drugs and Risk of Parkinson Disease: Nested Case-Control Study of People With Rheumatoid Arthritis, *Neurology* (2022). [DOI: 10.1212/WNL.00000000000013303](#)

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Citation: 2 rheumatoid arthritis drugs tied to lower risk of Parkinson's (2022, January 28) retrieved 1 February 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-01-rheumatoid-arthritis-drugs-tied-parkinson.html>

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