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Caffeine: the New Treatment for Parkinson's?

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We already know that drinking coffee and other caffeinated beverages can lessen a person's overall risk for getting Parkinson's disease, but what if a person already suffers from it?

A new study from the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre in Canada, published in *Neurology*, suggests that caffeine can help control the tremors, movement difficulties, and motor dysfunctions that are typical of Parkinson's sufferers. Medical News Today reports:

"This is one of the first studies to show the benefits of caffeine on motor impairment in people who have Parkinson's disease," stated Dr. Ronald Postuma, lead author of the study, a researcher in neurosciences at the RI MUHC, and Professor of Medicine in the Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery at McGill University. "Research has already shown that people who drink coffee have a lower risk of developing Parkinson's disease, but until now no study had looked at the immediate clinical implications of this finding."

The study involved 61 people with Parkinson's disease. The experimental group received a 100 mg dose of caffeine two times a day for the first three weeks, and then had their dosage upped to two 200 mg pills a day for another three weeks. The control group followed the same dosage schedule, but with placebo pills.

Dr. Postuma's results showed that "the people who received caffeine supplements experienced an improvement in their motor symptoms (a five-point improvement on the Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale, a rating scale used to measure the severity of the disease) over those who received the placebo."

While a larger-scale study is needed, this new data could indicate a new, semi-natural treatment option for the debilitating symptoms of Parkinson's disease, offering relief to millions of people around the world.

