



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Uncovering the true extent of Parkinson’s disease in Africa

UCL scientists are leading genetic studies of Parkinson’s disease in Africa to raise awareness, provide equitable access to treatments and help reduce the global impact of this debilitating condition.

Parkinson’s disease is the fastest-growing neurodegenerative illness worldwide. By 2040, more than 13 million people will be living with the disease – a quarter of them in Africa.

Studies have found at least 20 genes linked to an increased risk of Parkinson’s in Caucasians and several promising diagnostic and therapeutic targets have been identified. Successful treatments are likely to be developed for people of all racial backgrounds.

“Parkinson’s disease is prevalent in all parts of the world, but few research studies have included black African and Asian populations,” explains Dr Mie Rizig (UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology).

The team has built collaborations with neurologists and healthcare organisations in Nigeria and advocacy groups such as Parkinson’s Africa. As well as supporting local healthcare workers, the team is screening the genomes of hundreds of black Africans with Parkinson’s for known susceptibility and disease genes.

“This is an altruistic



◀ Professor Deborah Gill, then Director of UCL Medical School, said: “This is an altruistic and inspirational cohort of medical students who have answered the call and are eager to utilise their skills to help the NHS – we could not be any prouder.”

UCL experts engage public through podcasts on coronavirus

A unique UCL podcast series examined the variety of issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of the university’s experts.

Coronavirus: The Whole Story explored a range of topics with a panel of academics drawn from UCL’s breadth of disciplines, from intensive-care medicine and education to economics and health psychology.

The series received more than 30,000 listens from over 500 countries.

UCL is proud to have supported the NHS during this time.



