

TREMOR/PARKINSON'S REFERRAL GUIDELINE

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HIGH RISK

SUGGESTED EMERGENT CONSULTATION

SYMPTOMS AND LABS

Sudden worsening of tremor or Parkinson's symptoms in a patient with a deep brain stimulator (DBS).

Acute onset tremor/movement disorder which is severe and disabling.

EXAM:

High amplitude resting and/or action tremor. Severe rigidity, bradykinesia

SUGGESTED PREVISIT WORKUP

Rule out medication induced tremor in the case of new onset tremor.

Consider the possibility of anxiety contributing to tremor in a patient with a previously mild tremor. DBS patients should call the office of the doctor who manages their DBS.

LABS:

Urinalysis should be checked with any acute decline in Parkinson's symptoms.

MODERATE RISK

SUGGESTED CONSULTATION OR CO-MANAGEMENT

SYMPTOMS AND LABS

Suspected Parkinson's disease (PD): Tremor, slowed walking, loss of dexterity, poor balance.

Suspected Essential tremor: Bilateral action tremor.

EXAM:

PD- Unilateral resting tremor, cogwheel rigidity, decreased arm swing, micrographia, shuffling gait. ET-high frequency action tremor

SUGGESTED WORKUP

Neuroimaging does not need to be performed prior to being evaluated by neurology in the case of suspected Parkinson's disease or essential tremor.

LABS:

Lab work is not necessary prior to being seen by neurology.

LOW RISK

SUGGESTED ROUTINE CARE

SYMPTOMS AND LABS

Long standing bilateral tremor of the hands which is non-bothersome and not interfering with daily activities

EXAM:

Low amplitude action tremor of the hands and/or head

SUGGESTED MANAGEMENT

Reassurance that essential tremor is a slowly progressive condition.

If the patient is already taking a beta blocker switching to propranolol can be attempted.

Examine the medication list for possible medication induced tremor.

LABS:

Thyroid function should be checked.

CLINICAL PEARLS

- Patients treated with DBS should have home programmers which would allow them to make sure that the unit is still on.
- Tremor of PD most often starts unilaterally in the hands but a unilateral resting leg/foot tremor can also be the presenting symptom.
- Reconsider the diagnosis of essential tremor in anyone with a new onset tremor that progresses significantly over the course of months to a few years.
- The most common cause for an acute worsening in Parkinson's symptoms is infection, usually UTI.
- Never suddenly withdraw levodopa or a dopamine agonist because of the risk for a withdrawal syndrome
- A family history of tremor and/or alcohol responsive tremor is strongly suggestive of the diagnosis of essential tremor.

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