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## 'No support' for Parkinson's staff

**Fewer than one third of people with Parkinson's disease enjoy the support of their employer to help them keep working, says a study.**



The world of work can be a challenge for Parkinson's patients

The Parkinson's Disease Society, publishing the interim results of a major survey into employment among people with the illness, says that it was "disappointed" with the findings.

More than 120,000 people in the UK suffer from differing degrees of Parkinson's Disease - 10,000 are newly-diagnosed each year.

The condition can cause tremor in the hands and lead to mobility problems, but in many cases these effects can be controlled or lessened with medication.

### Capable of working

The society says that many patients are more than capable of holding down a job until their condition is advanced.

However the average number of years that people with Parkinson's worked after their diagnosis was less than five, making an average retirement age of less than 50.

Half of those surveyed had retired because of their Parkinson's Disease.

Fewer than one third of those questioned said they believed their employer had been unsupportive.

### 'Great concern'

John Bucknall, the Welfare and Employment Rights Manager at the society, said: "This is of great concern to us.

"We are particularly disappointed to learn that many people with Parkinson's feel unsupported by their employer, particularly in light of the government's commitment to employment for people with disabilities.

"Many people with Parkinson's retire early, and we are investigating the link between this lack of support offered

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and early retirement, as early retirement can be devastating for the whole family, with a reduced standard of living continuing into old age."

The survey involved 338 people aged between 27 and 76.

The society is launching a major study into the effects of drug treatments on quality of life across the UK.

The study will initially look at 200 patients being treated at 10 centres across the UK.

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