

# Exploring the Link Between Parkinson's and Alzheimer's

**Third  
Thursdays  
Webinar**

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THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION  
FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH



**Katie Kopil, PhD**

SVP, Head of Clinical  
Research, The Michael  
J. Fox Foundation  
(MJFF)



**Fred Goldstein**

President, Accountable  
Health, LLC



**Tom Tropea, DO,  
MPH**

Chief Medical Officer,  
Institute for  
Neurodegenerative  
Disorders



**Melissa Armstrong,  
MD, MSc**

Director, University of  
Florida Mangurian Clinical-  
Research Headquarters for  
Lewy Body Dementia



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# Defining Brain Diseases

**It can be difficult to give a clear diagnosis and prognosis for brain diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's because:**

- + Symptoms can overlap: movement, thinking, mood, sleep and more
- + Tests may be unavailable or invasive
- + Some people have changes linked to more than one disease
- + Diagnoses may evolve over time



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# Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and Lewy Body Dementia

- + These diseases affect the brain in different ways, but researchers are finding important areas of overlap
- + Learning across diseases may improve diagnosis, treatment and care

|                              | Parkinson's     | Lewy body dementia | Alzheimer's       |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Motor Symptoms               | Always          | Possible           | Possible          |
| Thinking and Memory Symptoms | Possible        | Always             | Always            |
| Key Proteins                 | Alpha-synuclein | Alpha-synuclein    | Amyloid Beta, Tau |



*Lewy body dementia is an umbrella term that includes dementia with lewy bodies (DLB) and Parkinson's disease dementia (PDD)*

# What's Happening in the Brain

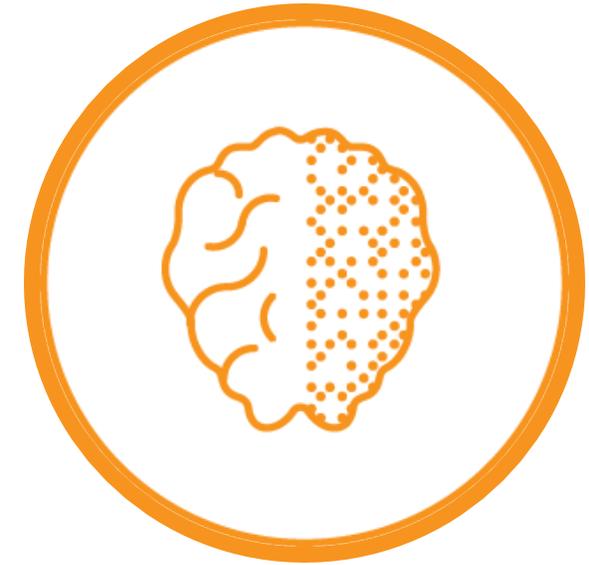
**Proteins generally carry out specific jobs to keep brain cells working properly.**



In these diseases, certain proteins misfold and clump, damaging cells



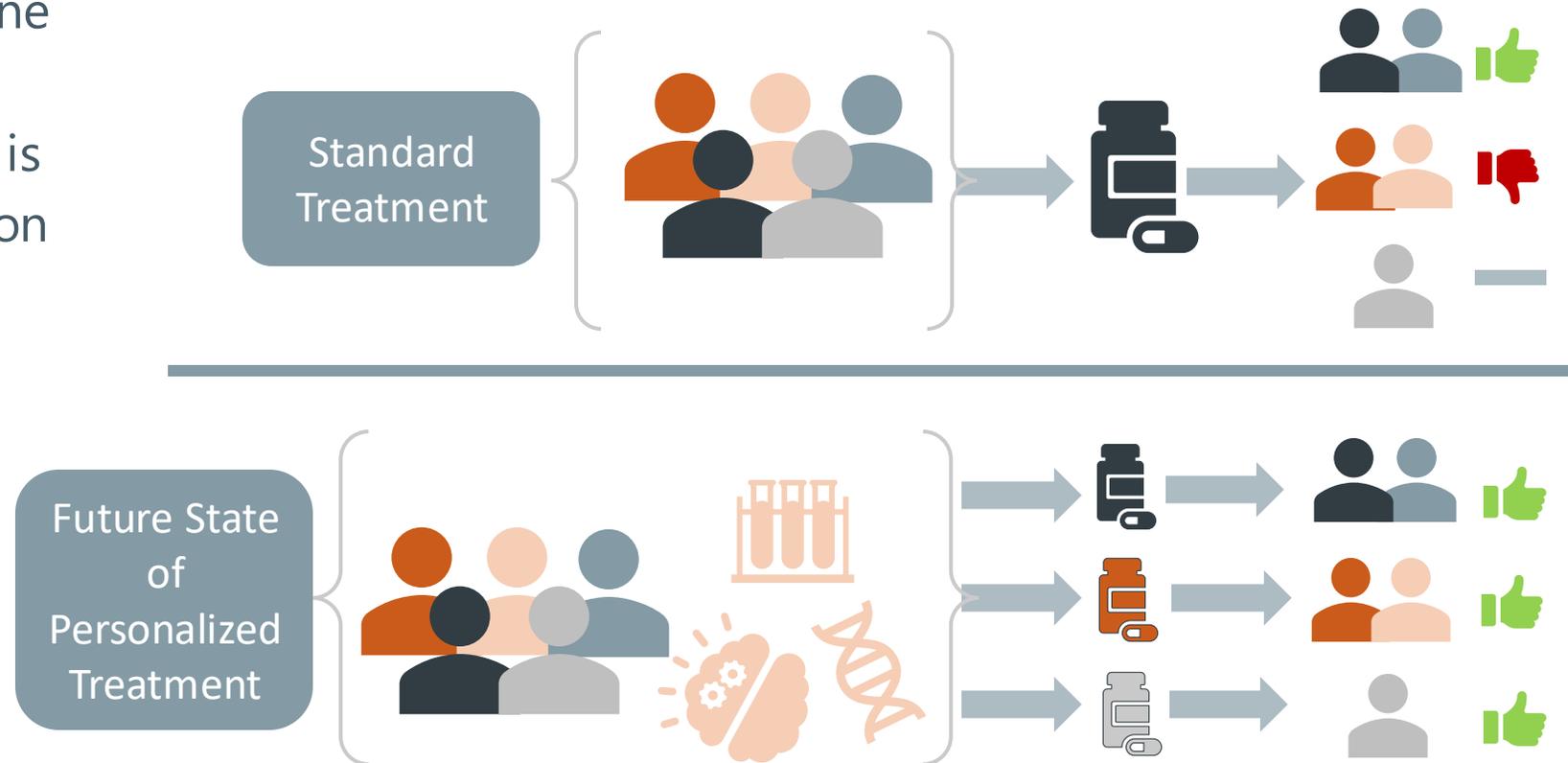
Key proteins include alpha-synuclein, amyloid beta and tau



Where and when these changes occur affects symptoms

# Shifting Our Knowledge Of Brain Disease

- + Cancer care moved from one disease to many subtypes, and brain disease research is heading in a similar direction
- + Focus is shifting from symptoms alone to underlying biology
- + The aim is to bring people living with disease precise diagnosis and targeted treatments



# What This Means for You Today



Parkinson's is still diagnosed mainly through clinical exams



Biomarker tests are improving but not yet routine



Overlap may explain why symptoms vary, which can support conversations with doctors

# Looking Ahead

**Researchers are working to understand more about the link between these diseases to:**

- + Create better tools to measure disease earlier and more accurately
- + Design new imaging and blood tests
- + Plan more targeted trials and therapies



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# The future of Parkinson's research starts with you.

Our groundbreaking study  
needs people with and  
without Parkinson's.

Get started at  
[michaeljfox.org/ppmi](https://michaeljfox.org/ppmi).

# Enter questions for our staff and panelists in the Q&A box on your screen.



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**Thank you  
for joining us.**



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