

NORTH OF SCOTLAND PARKINSON'S RESEARCH INTEREST GROUP

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SCOTLAND
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Newsletter Podcast Edition February 2024



“Every day is a school day with the NoSPRIG research podcasts.”

In late 2022, with Covid lockdowns becoming a distant memory, we gathered for our monthly online meeting to consider the way forward for 2023. We knew we needed a fresh new project.

[The North of Scotland Parkinson's Research Interest Group \(NoSPRIG\)](#) was a 'pandemic baby' – first mooted by Liz Nash, Research Support Network Lead, Parkinson's UK - just before everything turned on its head at the end of March 2020, put on hold, then finally come to fruition in January 2021 via Zoom – that thing most of us hadn't heard of but had very quickly become part of our everyday vocabulary.

However, by the end of 2022 we felt that the online webinar format which had been a Godsend when we couldn't venture much further than our front door was jaded, with attendance numbers dwindling, so we wanted to find a

new way of spreading the word about Parkinson's research. From the outset one of NoSPRIG's key objectives had been to try to reach people with Parkinson's, their families and health professionals in the most remote parts of Scotland, so we needed to tick that box.

We happened to have, on our steering group, Julie Jones, a health professional and academic with a vast knowledge of Parkinson's (not to mention limitless energy and enthusiasm!), plus Helga Macfarlane, a former broadcaster with young onset Parkinson's (less energy but equal enthusiasm) – and so the NoSPRIG Pods were born!

With invaluable technical help from Dan Holland, the son of another steering group member Jo, and his company Adventurous Audio, in January 2023 the Research Podcast got up and running.

Not for a moment did we expect the tremendous reception the series went on to receive. A

short trial turned into 6 months, then 6 months turned into a year – and at the last count 14 episodes covering everything from stem cell research to speech issues.

[Read an interview with Julie and Helga, about their experience of creating the podcast series.](#)

We are now entering our second year of recordings with interviews on sleep, technology and gait, to name but a few, already lined up. For every episode we invite people with Parkinson's, via social media ([X formerly Twitter: @nosprig](#)), to submit questions on forthcoming topics and have had feedback from as far afield as South America!

Of course, the NoSPRIG podcasts wouldn't be possible without the cooperation of all the interviewees who have kindly given of their valuable time to share their knowledge with us. Julie, Helga and all of us at NoSPRIG cannot thank them enough.

We are also extremely grateful to Dan, whose technical expertise and endless patience, when the recording audio has dropped out or we have stuttered and stumbled, has kept the show on the road.

Podcast Schedule

January – Clare Johnson, Parkinson's Specialist Occupational Therapist, University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation

Trust, and member of the Parkinson's Disease Guidelines Committee of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

February - Sleep Research - Dr David Breen, Senior Clinical Research Fellow & Honorary Consultant Neurologist, University of Edinburgh.

March 8th – Parkinson's in Women, to mark International Women's Day - Richelle Flanagan, a state registered dietician, diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2017, Co-founder of Women's Parkinson's Project, member of Dublin Branch of the Parkinson's Association of Ireland.

March – Richelle Flanagan, food and nutrition.

April – PD App – Kuhan Pushpi, diagnosed with Young Onset PD some 10 years ago, and who has researched and developed an App for tracking medication and symptoms in Parkinson's

May – Gene research - Dr Kathryn Bowles, Group Leader, UK Dementia Research Institute, University of Edinburgh

June – Freezing of Gait - Dr Will Young, Senior Lecturer in Rehabilitation Psychology, University of Exeter

NoSPRIG Pods are available on most podcast platforms or <https://nosprigpod.podbean.com/> with new episodes being released monthly.