

Understanding Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease

April 25 2022, by Laurel Kelly



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease is a rare, degenerative, fatal brain disorder. It affects about 1 person in every 1 million per year worldwide, and about 350 cases are diagnosed per year in the U.S., according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

The cause of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease appears to be abnormal versions of a type of protein called a prion. Normally these proteins are produced in the body and are harmless. But when they're misshapen, they become infectious and can harm normal biological processes.

Signs and symptoms of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease can be similar to those of other dementialike brain disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease. But Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease usually progresses much more rapidly.

Early signs and symptoms typically include:

- Personality changes.
- Memory loss.
- Impaired thinking.
- Blurred vision or blindness.
- Insomnia.
- Incoordination.
- Difficulty speaking.
- Difficulty swallowing.
- Sudden, jerky movements.

As the disease progresses, mental symptoms worsen. Most people eventually fall into a coma. Heart failure, lung failure, pneumonia or other infections are generally the cause of death, which usually occurs within a year.

Treatment of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease focuses on relieving pain and other symptoms.

©2022 Mayo Clinic News Network.

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Understanding Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (2022, April 25) retrieved 23 July 2023 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-04-creutzfeldt-jakob-disease.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.