

Creatine Parkinson trial begins

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A large-scale national clinical trial has started to learn if the nutritional supplement creatine can slow the progression of Parkinson's disease.

While creatine is not an approved therapy for Parkinson's or any other condition, the potential benefit of creatine in fighting Parkinson's disease was identified by researchers through a new rapid method for screening potential compounds.

The double-blind, placebo-controlled, Phase III study -- one of the largest Parkinson's clinical trials to date -- is being conducted at 51 medical centers in the United States and Canada, involving 1,720 people with early stage Parkinson's.

The National Institutes of Health trial is designed to allow researchers to work with Parkinson's patients over a long period of time, with a goal of finding effective and lasting treatments.

"This study represents the next major step in the quest for a medicine that can slow down the progression of Parkinson's disease," said Dr. John Fang, a Vanderbilt University Medical Center neurologist and one of the study's investigators. "Earlier studies have shown promising results, but without a long-term study, we cannot know for sure."

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