

Title	Breaking Barriers to Offer Evidence-Based Services for Patients with Parkinson's Disease in Gauteng
Organisation	Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital, Gauteng Department of Health
Innovation	<p>The Parkinson's Group exemplifies proactive healthcare advocacy. By identifying gaps, quantifying patient needs, and implementing solutions, the hospital has established a precedent for addressing healthcare inequities. The group represents more than clinical service delivery and establishes a replicable model for addressing care gaps for patients with Parkinson's across resource-limited settings.</p> <p>A needs analysis is conducted to determine the availability of rehabilitation services for patients with Parkinson's in a South African public health setting. It was concluded that no designated service was available, thus, making the Parkinson's Group unique to Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital. The current burden of disease in South Africa compounded by poor socio-economic status of the majority of South Africans results in patients being unable to access as well as afford travel costs to attend daily hospital appointments. The innovation aims to address the challenge at various levels. First, a service of this nature has not been conducted at any public health sector setting. Secondly, the design and conceptualisation of service is completed with patients who provide inputs, which speaks to patient-centred models of care as opposed to medical models of care. Thirdly, the group facilitates social participation as it was created to address and support patient mental, social and emotional needs. The group creates a sense of belonging and patients find comfort and support in other group members. Lastly, since it is the only group for patients with Parkinson's disease in public healthcare, in Gauteng, there are many patients that travel from far to attend the group sessions.</p> <p>The group represents the epitome of multidisciplinary healthcare, uniting 9 departments in seamless collaboration, namely Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy, Audiology, Neurology, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Palliative Care (including Social Work and Spiritual Care), Neuropsychiatry and Podiatry. This comprehensive approach transforms fragmented care into a cohesive patient-centred experience that addressed every aspect of Parkinson's disease management.</p>
Impact	<p>The screening protocol has identified 155 patients with Parkinson's disease, providing each with an immediate rehabilitation plan that eliminates the traditional delays and multiple appointments that burden patients. This systematic approach strengthened the hospital's network with neurologists, ensuring sustainable referral pathways and raising crucial awareness about rehabilitation's role in Parkinson's care. The following are benefits of the group model:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminates up to 9 separate monthly appointments per patient. 2. Reduces transportation costs for patients already facing financial hardship. 3. Minimises waiting times in an overburdened public healthcare system. 4. Group sessions bridge critical knowledge gaps.