

Letters to the Editor

Smoking, Parkinson's Disease, and Melanoma

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To the Editors: The recent article on incidence of cancer after diagnosis of Parkinson's disease is strongly confirmatory that risk of melanoma is significantly increased whereas risk of smoking-related cancers is reduced, albeit nonsignificantly (1). This finding was thought to suggest a gene-environment interaction, and one hypothesis was given related to the detoxifying enzyme P450 D6. However, no clear biological explanation was given for the melanoma finding.

It should be noted that smoking has been found inversely related to risk of melanoma in four observational studies (2–5). This is in contradistinction to the case for basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma of the skin, for which smoking is a risk factor (4). Again, no clear biological explanation has been provided. However, combining the results of ref. 1 with those of refs. 2–5, it seems that the same mechanism related to Parkinson's disease that reduces the risk of smoking-related cancers also increases the risk of melanoma. Perhaps this suggestion will be useful for both sets of studies.

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