

Response to Patient Dignity Question – JR 1958

James: a husband and father in his mid-60s diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease a year ago, admitted to palliative care unit for symptom management, possible early-onset dementia

James described increasing irritability with exacerbation of movement-related Parkinson's symptoms and reported that his wife has observed signs of cognitive impairment like forgetting things. He stated that he is the youngest of five children, has two siblings who are deceased, and that his older brother also has Parkinson's Disease (PD). Although he indicated that it's been somewhat helpful to have someone else in his life with Parkinson's who can relate to some of what he's experiencing, he also shared that he and his brother have differed considerably in their symptoms and experiences with PD.

When asked about some of the things that are important to him or that would help us provide best care to him, James reported that he's in his second marriage and has older children from his first marriage and younger children from current marriage; he named that his wife and children are very important to him, though also noted that his love for and commitment to teaching (his paid employment) can sometimes interfere with spending as much time with family as he would like. He stated that he loves music, enjoys their three family cats, and also enjoys cycling and spending time on his yard. Since being diagnosed with PD about a year ago, James named how his symptoms have limited him in being able to continue participating in previously enjoyable activities like golf and tennis. When I further explored how his Parkinson's symptoms have affected him, James endorsed feeling vulnerable and uncomfortable at times, as well as irritable or frustrated by physical and cognitive limitations. James reported that he's hoping to get his symptoms better managed during his hospital stay so that he can more fully enjoy and appreciate time with family and doing enjoyable activities that are meaningful to him. He expressed openness in continuing to see me (unit psychologist) to further explore strategies (in addition to medication and rehab interventions) that may help him manage and cope with his Parkinson's symptoms.