

NCER-PD phase 2

A national survey on sleep quality to better prevent neurodegenerative diseases

Luxembourg, 15 March 2021 — The National Centre of Excellence in Research on Parkinson's Disease (NCER-PD) launches a nation-wide research survey on sleep behaviour disorders under the patronage of the Ministry of Health. All Luxembourg residents aged between 55 and 75 years will receive a personal invitation letter in subsequent weeks. This survey is part of the second phase of the NCER-PD research programme focusing on risk factors associated with the onset of Parkinson's disease. As poor sleep quality can be associated with various conditions, including neurodegenerative diseases, this study ultimately aims to develop strategies to prevent disorders such as Parkinson's.

We spend around one-third of our lives sleeping and sleep quality is essential for good health. In this new study, the NCER-PD team is interested in a very specific sleep disorder called "Rapid eye movement sleep behaviour disorder" or RBD. It involves abnormal behaviours during one of the phases of the sleep cycle, the REM sleep during which we dream. While asleep, the people concerned are restless: they act out their dreams, speaking, yelling and making sudden movements, which may unintentionally disturb bed partners. RBD mainly affects adults over 55 years of age. "The causes of this disorder are not yet fully understood, and further research is necessary to better understand an emerging link with neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease," explains Prof. Rejko Krüger, coordinator of NCER-PD. "The national online survey on sleep quality is the first step in that direction."

All Luxembourg resident aged 55 to 75 years will receive an official letter by post, inviting them to participate in this survey. If interested, they will be able to log on to a specific website, register and answer a short online questionnaire taking maximum 10 minutes. Based on their answers, participants who are likely to have RBD will be eligible for the next steps within the study. They will be individually contacted via phone and asked to take part in further diagnostic tests. At the end of the full process, people for whom the RBD diagnosis is confirmed will be invited to join a new cohort – a group of participants – that the researchers will monitor over time through yearly follow-up visits.

The online survey and the following steps will allow assessing for the first time how many people in Luxembourg are affected by RBD. "Therefore, it is important that as many people as possible participate in the survey, not only those who are already aware of their sleep problem," explains Dr Lukas Pavelka, clinician-scientist of the study. "Every answer will help our research."

As treatment for this sleep disorder is available, the diagnosis will be beneficial and help to significantly improve the participants' sleep as well as their quality of life. Beyond this direct advantage, the long-term study will gather additional knowledge about the link between RBD and neurodegenerative diseases. "We hope to shed some light on why later in life some people transition to the early phases of Parkinson's while others are protected. This will facilitate the development of new strategies to prevent this conversion," concludes Prof. Krüger.

For more information and registration, please visit www.RBD.lu or watch the [video](#) about the study.

This project is organised by NCER-PD, in collaboration with the University of Luxembourg, the Luxembourg Institute of Health and the Integrated Biobank of Luxembourg, the Centre Hospitalier de Luxembourg and the Laboratoire national de Santé.

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