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Progressive Supranuclear Palsy

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Source

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). *Progressive Supranuclear Palsy Information Page*.

Progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP) is a rare brain disorder that causes serious and progressive problems with control of gait and balance, along with complex eye movement and thinking problems. One of the classic signs of the disease is an inability to aim the eyes properly, which occurs because of lesions in the area of the brain that coordinates eye movements. Some individuals describe this effect as a blurring. Affected individuals often show alterations of mood and behavior, including depression and apathy as well as progressive mild dementia.

The disorder's long name indicates that the disease begins slowly and continues to get worse (*progressive*), and causes weakness (*palsy*) by damaging certain parts of the brain above pea-sized structures called nuclei that control eye movements (*supranuclear*).

PSP was first described as a distinct disorder in 1964, when three scientists published a paper that distinguished the condition from Parkinson's disease. It is sometimes referred to as Steele-Richardson-Olszewski syndrome, reflecting the combined names of the scientists who defined the disorder. Although PSP gets progressively worse, no one dies from PSP itself.