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[American Academy of Neurology](#)

## **Family history of melanoma linked to Parkinson's disease**

SEATTLE – People with a family history of melanoma may have a greater risk of developing Parkinson's disease, according to a study released today that will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 61st Annual Meeting in Seattle, April 25 to May 2, 2009.

The study involved nearly 157,000 people who did not have Parkinson's disease. They were asked if their parents or siblings had been diagnosed with melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer. Researchers then traced their progress for a period of 14 to 20 years. During that time, 616 of the people were diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Researchers found that people with a reported family history of melanoma were nearly twice as likely to develop Parkinson's as people with no family history.

"The results from this study suggest that melanoma and Parkinson's could share common genetic components," said study author Xiang Gao, MD, PhD, of the Harvard University School of Public Health in Boston, MA. "More research needs to be done to examine the relationship between these two diseases."

Other studies have shown that people with Parkinson's disease have a greater risk of developing melanoma.

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The study was supported by the National Institutes of Health and the Parkinson Study Group.

The American Academy of Neurology, an association of more than 21,000 neurologists and neuroscience professionals, is dedicated to promoting the highest quality patient-centered neurologic care. A neurologist is a doctor with specialized training in diagnosing, treating and managing disorders of the brain and nervous system such as multiple sclerosis, restless legs syndrome, Alzheimer's disease, narcolepsy, and stroke.

For more information about the American Academy of Neurology, visit [www.aan.com](http://www.aan.com).

The AAN 61st Annual Meeting, the world's largest gathering of neurology professionals, takes place April 25 to May 2, 2009, in Seattle. Visit [www.aan.com/am](http://www.aan.com/am) for more information.

Editor's Note: Study authors are available for interviews. Please contact Jenine Anderson, [janderson@aan.com](mailto:janderson@aan.com) or Jay Mac Bride, [jmacbride@aan.com](mailto:jmacbride@aan.com).

To access 2009 AAN Annual Meeting abstracts available February 25, 2009, visit <http://www.aan.com/go/science/abstracts>.

Late-breaking abstracts will be featured in press release at the 2009 AAN Annual Meeting in Seattle.

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