

The German Parkinson Study Group

The Competence Network on Parkinson's Disease

Chronic neurological diseases not only comprise one of the most common disease categories, but are also the subject of numerous new therapeutic research activities and clinical drug trials. A therapy is all the more helpful, the sooner its efficacy and safety profile is proven and the drug is made available for clinical use. Drug evaluation can only be achieved with clinical studies.

One primary aim of the Competence network on Parkinson's Disease (CNP) is to create optimal conditions for rapid, safe and comprehensive drug evaluation. Therefore the members of the CNP have founded in 2003 the study group for Parkinson's disease called the "German Parkinson Study Group" (GPS).

Qualifications

The Competence network on Parkinson's Disease is a cooperative group of Parkinson's Disease experts in Germany. 18 university and nine other hospitals (city and special Parkinson clinics) are actually involved in the network and the GPS. In the future further hospitals and an increasing number of neurologists in private practice will take part.

The Competence network on Parkinson's Disease provides high standard qualifications and meets the demands for the timely performance of safe, clinical studies according to GCP.

- ➔ Numerous well respected neurological hospitals are interconnected and co-ordinated within the network and its GPS. This enables a speedy recruitment of patients.
- ➔ In the competence network an internet-based system for general communication as well as for the capture, storage and handling of relevant project data has been established. An uniform standard for documentation and follow up is used to register patients with Parkinson's Disease, Multiple System Atrophy, Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, as well as healthy controls. The steadily increasing patient database currently comprises >4500 data sets (clinical diagnosis, symptoms and signs, other neurological syndromes, psychic and psychiatric dysfunctions, indices for symptomatic causes and medication). Two material banks, a gene bank (German Parkinson's Disease Gene Bank (called GEPARD) and a brain bank (in cooperation with the German Brain-Net) were also generated.
- ➔ A close cooperation exists between the PCN and the coordination center for clinical studies (CCS). The CCS at the Philipps-University of Marburg offers competence in GCP-conformable planning, performance, biometrics, monitoring, data-management and data-analysis of clinical studies. GPS and CCS together are able to guarantee the quality of planning and monitoring as well as the professional implementation of clinical studies.

Structure of the GPS

The GPS structure is composed of three interconnecting parts:

Executive Committee

Members are highly qualified neurologists with many years of experience in the implementation of clinical studies in accordance with GCP.

Tasks

- definition of study contents
- identification of industrial partners
- study management
- Finances
- choice of co-operating partners

Study management group

Members of the executive board and managers of the regional study management centers.

Tasks

- study management
- recruitment of patients
- recruitment of other hospitals
- supervision of participating hospitals
- training of participating physicians

Clinical study secretary, Marburg

Project management: Co-ordinator of PCN

Tasks

- contact to the pharmaceutical industry
- organisation
- administration of study performance

The decision about the conduction of studies is made by the executive board. All participants are requested to contribute their ideas and propositions. The members have committed themselves to communicate all studies offered by a sponsor to the GPS.