

SIU Med School Part of National Parkinson's Disease Study

Individuals who are diagnosed with early stage Parkinson's disease are being recruited by Southern Illinois University School of Medicine as part of a national study of the drug pioglitazone (Actos[®]).

“This is an important study looking for a drug to slow the progression of Parkinson's disease,” said Dr. Rodger J. Elble, Ph.D., professor and chair of the neurology department at SIU and principal investigator of the local Phase II clinical trial.

The study will assess the efficacy, general safety and tolerability of pioglitazone in treatment of people who have early Parkinson's disease. Currently, pioglitazone is approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of Type II diabetes, but has not been studied in people with Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson disease affects approximately one million people in the United States, and is the second most common neurodegenerative condition after Alzheimer's disease.

The study is sponsored by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes and Michael J. Fox Foundation and is being conducted at 42 research centers across the U.S.

Volunteers 30 years old and older who have been diagnosed for five or fewer years are being sought. Participants must have been on no previous Parkinson medications except Selegiline or Rasagiline for no more than 8 months prior to enrollment. Participants will be followed by study physicians for about 48 weeks. There is no cost to participate in the study. Results will be shared with the participant's personal physician.

Persons with early Parkinson's disease who are interested in participating in the study should contact Dolly Kelley, SIU Neurology, at 217-545-7829 weekdays or dkelley@siumed.edu.