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DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ATTITUDES, ABILITY, PHYSICAL WELL-BEING
AND SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT OF PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE
WHO JOIN THE PARKINSON'S SOCIETY AND THOSE WHO DO NOT JOIN.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of
Arts in Psychology at Massey University.

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This study is dedicated to James Sydney Henney, late of Atawhai Hospital, Napier, my first Parkinson's patient.

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ABSTRACT

An investigation was undertaken to compare demographic, physical disability, and some personality differences between members and non-members of the Parkinson's Disease Society. In addition, the leisure activities of subjects were investigated, and levels of activity before and after onset of illness were compared. Eighty-seven patients were interviewed using a structured interview, while the Psychological Adjustment to Illness Scale was used to measure differences in adjustment to the illness between the member and non-member groups. While few differences were found between members and non-members, a trend in the amount of leisure activities the two groups enjoyed was discovered. Whether these differences were there prior to joining the Society, or whether the Society membership mediated the differences could not be ascertained from a correlational study, and the implications of this are considered. Of the activities provided by the Parkinson's Disease Society, members appreciated the information contained in the newsletter the most.