
POSTER ABSTRACT**Empowered Living with Parkinson's: Community-Based Programs for
Parkinson's Symptom Management**

International Conference on Integrated Care (ICIC26), Birmingham, 13-15 April 2026

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Background: Parkinson's Disease (PD) manifests differently in every person, causing symptoms ranging from slowed speech and memory issues to tremors and hampered gait movements; thus, treatment requires a more individualized approach. While direct medical treatments can improve impaired motor functioning, non-medical approaches, such as exercise and community engagement, play a key role in improving and/or delaying the worsening of symptoms.

Approach: The Riderwood Parkinson's Community Initiative is developed and led by residents of the Riderwood Senior Living Community in Silver Spring, Maryland, to assess the availability and effectiveness of non-medical interventions for individuals with PD. The project team is collaborating with the Riderwood PD Community to generate a database of local and international PD program offerings and administer a survey to assess the needs of residents.

The PD Community, with the assistance of the project team, has developed a survey that gathers descriptive information about the residents, including their Parkinson's diagnosis date, self-assessed stage of disease progression, symptoms, age, sex, programs they have already participated in, and the perceived success of these programs. The PD community at Riderwood will then disseminate the surveys to residents, both via email and personal mailboxes located outside of each resident's living quarters.

Results: The survey will generate data on the range of non-medical interventions currently accessed by residents and highlight gaps in service availability and program effectiveness. Preliminary results from the global review of programs and feedback from the Riderwood community indicate significant variation in individual disease progression and treatment needs among residents, reflecting the heterogeneity of Parkinson's Disease. The anticipated results will inform targeted development of new or enhanced non-medical programs for residents of the Riderwood senior living community and broader PD populations.

Implications: This Riderwood Senior Living Community initiative, developed and led by residents, highlights the importance of people as partners in improving their own health and well-being. Their involvement shows empowerment and engagement among the residents who are also Parkinson's patients. These residents are taking initiative in this project by identifying the gaps in their current disease management and communicating their needs to develop a program more tailored to them. The project will show how personalized, community-based initiatives can advance the quality of life for those living with PD, with the intention of expanding this insight globally.