Parkinson's disease: Researchers tout effectiveness of "brain pacemaker"

Mass Device

Deep-brain stimulation is an effective treatment for Parkinson's disease for at least 3 years, according to a study in the journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

Deep brain stimulation, or "brain pacemakers," are effective in treating patients with Parkinson's disease for at least 3 years, according to a new study published in *Neurology*, the medical journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

The study [1] evaluated nearly 90 patients suffering from the neurological disorder who were stimulated in the globus pallidus interna area of the brain and 70 patients who were stimulated in the subthalamic nucleus. Both patient groups showed stable improvements over 36 months in symptoms arising from the disease.

DBS is a procedure that involves the implanting of an electrode into the brain, which is connected by a wire under the skin to a battery implanted near the collarbone, functioning much like a pacemaker.

Large med-tech players' DBS devices, including St. Jude Medical [2]'s (NYSE:STJ [3]) Libra and LibraXP systems and Medtronic [4]'s (NYSE:MDT [5]) Activa device, treat symptoms of Parkinson's. However, neither are seen as curative of the disease itself.

In April of last year, Eli Lilly & Co. (NYSE:LLY [6]) and Medtronic inked a collaboration [7] to develop a drug pump and specially designed catheter to deliver a biologic therapy made by Lilly.

The biologic, a modified form of glial cell-derived neurotrophic factor, will be delivered to the brain over time by the Medtronic pump. The companies said the

therapy has the potential to "impact the neuro-degeneration that leads to worsening symptoms and progression of Parkinson's disease," according to a press release.

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