

Abstract

Parkinson's disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder, following Alzheimer's disease. The four most prevalent symptoms of Parkinson's disease are motor related, limiting a patient's ability to complete tasks involving movement. This creates barriers for Parkinson's patients, preventing them from doing everyday tasks [1]. One such activity is gardening [B.1].

Gardening is important for people's well being, especially for the wellness of the aging community [B.4]. As people lose their ability to maintain their garden, are unable to complete landscaping tasks, gardens can act as a constant reminder of someone's old age and declining health [2].

Rose grafting is a specific gardening activity that is currently inaccessible to the Parkinson's community [B.4]. Rose grafting is an intricate process, requiring stable hands, finger strength, and high precision movements [B.1]. Due to the nature of the disease, rose grafting is a difficult, unsafe, and futile activity for Parkinson's patients.

This Request for Proposal is presented to improve the lived experiences of Parkinson's patients who want to participate in gardening. We identified a need within the Parkinson's community for a solution that enables patients to graft roses. The four high level objectives of this opportunity are to create a solution that is safe to use, accessible to gardeners with Parkinson's disease, easy to learn, and successfully completes grafts.

This opportunity emerged from conversations with a Parkinson's patient, Philomena Thachile, the Parkinson's Canada Group Facilitator, Bruno Bellissim, and the director of the Riverwood Conservancy Enabling Garden, Kerry Furneaux. The key stakeholders of this opportunity include Parkinson's patients, gardeners with other motor skill-related disabilities, and support networks for Parkinson's patients.

Addressing this opportunity will welcome Parkinson's patients into the rose grafting community. This will ensure that they stay connected to their garden, while also improving their overall well-being. The writers of this RFP hope the solution will inspire a conversation about increasing the inclusion of Parkinson's patients in the gardening community. This conversation could be transformed into action by the development of additional solutions that allow Parkinson's patients to become active gardeners.

Abstract References

[1] A. Samii, J. G. Nutt, and B. R. Ransom, "Parkinson's disease," *The Lancet*, vol. 363, no. 9423, pp. 1783–1793, 2004

[2] M. Bhatti, "when i'm in the garden i can create my own paradise': Homes and gardens in later life," *The Sociological Review*, vol. 54, no. 2, pp. 318–341, 2006.