Neuropathy

- Onset is linked with the degeneration of the substantia nigra, partially causing a decrease in dopamine levels.

Treatment of Parkinson's

- Dopamine precursors (such as L-Dopa) are prescribed to relieve symptoms but its effectiveness decreases over time and continued use.
- Brain stimulation, particularly bilateral stimulation of subthalamic nucleus.
- Exercise can reduce motor symptoms by increasing levels of physical functioning, leg strength, and walking speed; Tai Chi, in particular works to improve balance so patients suffer fewer falls.
- Encourage exercise; patients generally unwilling to put the work in as in the beginning, exercise could be painful.

Actual cause is still unclear, but several elements have been implicated e.g. genes, toxins, viral infection. Parkinson's plus syndromes exhibit additional features, have faster progression, and not responsive to treatments.

Huntington's Disease/Chorea

- First described by George Huntington in 1872.
- Symptoms include jerky movements and a marked reduction in numerous cognitive functions.
- Progressive, with onset generally in late 40's, with a 15-year life expectancy after diagnosis.
- Affects 1 in 10,000 White Europeans and 1 in 1 million African Americans.
- Identified as carried on a dominant gene; so any carrier is affected with a 50% chance of passing the disease onto their offspring. A genetic test available to test potentially affected incidence.
- Although there is no cure, symptoms are managed with anti-depressants and anti-psychotics.

Motor Neurone Disease

- Group of diseases that affect motor neurones in the spinal cord; cau Gehrig's Disease, primary lateral sclerosis, bulbar palsy, progressive muscular atrophy.