

Semantic Variant Primary Progressive Aphasia (svPPA)

Information for patients and families

What is semantic variant primary progressive aphasia?

Semantic variant primary progressive aphasia is a brain disease that affects your ability to understand language.

What are the symptoms of svPPA?

People with svPPA usually have trouble:

- understanding what others are saying
- knowing the meaning of words or day-to-day things
- reading and writing

Over time, the language skills of people with svPPA become worse, and they begin to have a lot of trouble communicating with others. For some people, the way the disease affects their brain also causes changes in their behavior. For others, there may be a change in behaviour because they are experiencing so much difficulty understanding and communicating.



What causes svPPA?

We don't know what causes svPPA. We do know that it has something to do with the build up of a protein called TDP-43 in the language areas of the brain. This build up causes cells to die in that area. For now, an autopsy (examining the body after death) is the best way of knowing what caused the disease.

Are there treatments?

Right now, there is no cure for svPPA, and there are no helpful medicines that you can take. Practicing speaking skills for as long as possible can help.

What about safety?

Since svPPA affects your understanding, it can eventually become unsafe for a person with svPPA to:

- read (for example: medicine instructions, bills, legal papers)
- write (for example: cheques)
- cook
- drive
- live on their own



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