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Hazards: Solvent Linked to Higher Parkinson's Risk

By NICHOLAS BAKALAR

A new study of [twins](#) has found that trichloroethylene, or TCE, a solvent widely used in refrigerants and as a metal degreaser, is associated with an increased risk of [Parkinson's disease](#).

The [analysis](#), published Monday in *The Annals of Neurology*, used data from an American military twin registry to examine 99 twin pairs, average age 65, in which only one sibling had Parkinson's. A questionnaire was used to establish the twins' history of jobs and hobbies that would have exposed them to TCE.

A twin who had worked with TCE was more than six times as likely to have Parkinson's as one who had not, the researchers found. Twins exposed to two other solvents, perchloroethylene and carbon tetrachloride, substances used in dry cleaning and other industries, also had a slightly higher risk of developing Parkinson's.

The authors acknowledge that it is difficult to collect accurate information on exposure retrospectively, that the study is small, and that it is limited to occupational exposure. Still, the lead author, Dr. Samuel M. Goldman of [the Parkinson's Institute](#), said that almost everyone is exposed to these substances. "These are common contaminants," he said. "They are detected in blood, [breast milk](#), water and food."

According to Dr. Goldman and his colleagues, 50 million pounds of TCE are released annually into the environment in the United States.