NEW WALKING AID SYSTEM FOR PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON’S DISEASE

A wearable device offers people with Parkinson’s disease walking aid using a visual cue device and tactile insoles.

Wearable devices are transforming the health industry, offering patients a way to self-monitor and manage symptoms of various health conditions. A UK-based product designer has created a wearable device to treat menopausal hot flushes using cooling technology. Another innovation is a handheld device from Peru that helps people suffering from hyperhidrosis manage their symptoms with electrical impulses. A new wearable device from MedEXO Robotics is a walking aid system, called WalkAid, for people with Parkinson’s disease. It uses a visual cue device and tactile insoles to create guiding signals for the wearer.

Parkinson’s disease affects 10 million people globally and many experience freezing of gait, a mobility problem that makes walking difficult. With freezing of gait, performing movements such as turning, walking in a rush, or navigating narrow spaces can be hard. It can also cause people to fall and its unpredictability often reduces a patient’s confidence. WalkAid uses a visual cue device that is attachable to the user’s belt, cane or trousers. It projects a laser to guide the user when they begin to walk and helps maintain a steady walking pace. Another component of WalkAid is tactile insoles. These vibrate to create a walking rhythm, drawing the wearer’s attention to their walking rather than the surroundings. In addition, WalkAid has an accompanying app where users can customize settings and view data visuals.
Another design by MedEXO Robotics also targets people with neurodegenerative disease. It features a robotic glove, called ExoSteady, that suppresses tremors in the hand. MedEXO Robotics is creating solutions for diseases such as gait freezing which cannot be treated with drugs. Wearable devices can offer people non-invasive health solutions to alleviate symptoms that currently have no treatment methods. What other health conditions and diseases can be treated with a wearable device?

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