

Stem cell injections could ease tremors from Parkinson's

By Sarah Knapton

PATIENTS with Parkinson's disease could have stem cells injected into their brains to replace damaged nerves and restore movement as early as next year, following successful trials in monkeys.

A team of Japanese scientists made the prediction after successfully restoring nerve cells destroyed by a similar condition in primates.

The animals, suffering an artificially induced version of the disease, showed significant improvement two years after having precursor dopamine neurons derived from human stem cells transplanted into their brains.

Charities said if the effect could be replicated in humans, it would be "a groundbreaking feat".

The scientists hope to start looking for suitable patients for clinical trials within 15 months.

Professor Jun Takahashi, a Parkinson's neurosurgeon from Kyoto University, who led the research published in the journal *Nature*, said: "The monkeys became more active after cell transplantation: moved more rapidly and more smoothly, and showed less tremor."

31st August 2017
Sarah Knapton