Figure 1. Age-primed microglia hypothesis of Parkinson’s disease. Microglia functions differentially in the young (left) and aged (right) brain. Left: when facing pathogenic stimuli (large black dots), the healthy microglia in the young brain respond by releasing neurotrophic factors (small yellow dots) to support the endangered dopaminergic neurons and limit neuronal damages. Right: in the aged brain oxidative stress and inflammatory factors (small black dots), which damage the vulnerable dopaminergic neurons and eventually lead to neurodegeneration. (From Luo et al, 2010 with permission)