



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT ON

Multiple Sclerosis

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, unpredictable disease that damages the central nervous system and can affect nearly any function, but the most common symptoms are overwhelming fatigue, vision problems, and difficulties with mobility. This incurable disease has a significant impact on quality of life and can place high financial burdens on those with the disorder. There are currently 14 approved disease-modifying drugs for MS patients. While effective, many are expensive and may carry other health risks.

Multiple sclerosis affects an estimated

400,000 TO 1 MILLION AMERICANS

Sources: National Institutes of Health and National MS Society

Research Addressing Questions That Matter

PCORI funds **comparative clinical effectiveness research (CER)** to determine which healthcare options work best for which patients, based on their needs and preferences. CER produces evidence that helps people make better-informed healthcare choices.



PATIENT

I live more than 50 miles from the nearest city and getting to a physical therapist or clinic is difficult to treat my MS. Would a home-based exercise program work well to improve my fitness and reduce my pain?



CLINICIAN

I need more information on what drugs might work best for my patients with MS, whether they are using drugs for the first time, or they want to switch medications. Is there any research that can provide me the evidence I need to help my patients make the best choices?

STUDY SPOTLIGHT

Comparing Safety and Effectiveness of Medicines Patients Take for Many Years to Treat Multiple Sclerosis

Although there is no cure for MS, medicines can reduce the number and seriousness of MS attacks for people with relapsing-remitting MS, the most common form of the disease. Previous studies have shown that rituximab, a drug approved to treat some cancers and other diseases, can also treat relapsing-remitting MS. The US Food and Drug Administration hasn't approved this medicine for MS, however, and doctors don't know how well this medicine or other commonly used MS medicines work over many years, or whether they are safe when patients take them for a long time. This study is using information from a Swedish database of patients with MS and from patients in Southern California with MS to look at how effective and safe rituximab is relative to other medicines used to treat MS over a period of up to nine years. More information about this project may be found at www.pcori.org/Piehl287.

STUDY SPOTLIGHT

Comparing the Effectiveness of Clinic- and Home-Based Telerehabilitation

This study is measuring whether people with MS get as much benefit from an exercise-based rehabilitation program delivered via Internet or telephone as when the same therapy is provided in a clinic. Clinics that can provide such services are scarce in rural and low-income areas. More information about this project may be found at www.pcori.org/Rimmer017.

As of November 2020, PCORI has awarded

\$66 MILLION TO FUND 11

comparative clinical effectiveness research studies related to multiple sclerosis.

BY THE NUMBER OF PROJECTS

Special Populations Studied

