



## Special Focus on Rehabilitation

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Welcome to the National MS Society's inaugural edition of *MS Professional Connection*, our quarterly newsletter for healthcare professionals. We intend to offer timely information and resources on a variety of clinical topics. Our first edition focuses on *rehabilitation* and on some exciting new findings related to *vestibular rehabilitation*, *walking* and *exercise training* that reinforce the benefits of rehab for people living with MS.

### SOCIETY CONSENSUS ON REHABILITATION

A growing body of evidence indicates that improvement in mobility, activities of daily living, quality of life and prevention of complications, may be realized by a planned program of exercise, functional training, and activities that address the specific needs of the individual. Rehabilitation is a key component of comprehensive healthcare for people with MS, at all stages of the disease.

*Read the full consensus statement at:  
[nationalMSSociety.org/rehabconsensus](http://nationalMSSociety.org/rehabconsensus).*

## Can Exercise Slow the Progression of Multiple Sclerosis?

*Ulrik Dalgas PhD; Egon Stenager MDMS*

It has been suggested that exercise (or physical activity), which is a significant component of rehabilitation, might have the potential to have an impact on multiple sclerosis (MS) pathology and thereby slow the disease process in MS patients. The objective of this meta-study was to identify the literature linking physical exercise (or activity) and MS disease progression. Data from intervention studies evaluating disease progression by clinical measures do not support a disease-modifying effect of exercise; however, MRI data, patient-reported data and data from the EAE model indicate a possible disease-modifying effect of exercise. It was concluded that some evidence supports the possibility of a disease-modifying potential of exercise (or physical activity) in MS patients, but future studies using better methodologies are needed to confirm this. (Edited from abstract.)

*Read the article for free at: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3302199/?tool=pubmed](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3302199/?tool=pubmed).*

### TALKING TO YOUR PATIENTS ABOUT REHABILITATION

This brochure is designed to facilitate conversations with your patients about rehabilitation and MS. Physicians and nurses have an important role to play in these discussions — providing timely information as well as referrals to the appropriate professionals.

*Get the brochure at: [nationalMSSociety.org/talkingrehab](http://nationalMSSociety.org/talkingrehab).*

## Effects of Vestibular Rehabilitation on MS-Related Fatigue and Balance

*Jeffrey R. Hebert, John R. Corboy, Mark M. Manago and Margaret Schenkman*

Fatigue and impaired balance are two common and troublesome symptoms experienced by people with MS. A recent controlled study suggests that a 6-week balance and eye movement-focused exercise program can improve balance, reduce fatigue, and reduce disability due to dizziness or disequilibrium. Results lasted for at least 4 weeks following supervised training. Larger and longer studies are needed to determine how long the benefits last, and which people with MS would be most likely to respond to the training program. The study was partially funded by a pilot research grant from the National MS Society.

*Read full abstract and purchase article at: [ptjournal.apta.org/content/91/8/1166.abstract](http://ptjournal.apta.org/content/91/8/1166.abstract).*

PATIENT RESOURCE:  
FALL PREVENTION  
VIDEO FOR PATIENTS

Studies indicate that falls are quite common among people with MS and are often associated with injuries and negative impact on quality of life.

Watch the video at: [nationalMSsociety.org/mslearnonline](http://nationalMSsociety.org/mslearnonline).

## Walking Impairment in Patients with MS: Exercise Training As a Treatment Option

*Robert W Motl, Myla D Goldman, and Ralph HB Benedict*

Walking impairment is a ubiquitous feature of MS and a sentinel characteristic of the later or advanced stages of the disease. This paper presents a conceptual rationale along with empirical evidence for exercise training as a rehabilitation approach for managing walking impairment and improving walking function in persons with MS. Empirically, based on cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental research, physical activity and exercise training have been associated with beneficial effects on walking function in persons with MS. Collectively, exercise training and physical activity might hold significant potential for the management of progressive mobility disability in MS.

Get the article free at: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2999522](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2999522).

### NATIONAL MSSOCIETY BROCHURES FOR PATIENTS

- Managing MS Through Rehabilitation: Staying well
- Controlling Spasticity in MS: Managing specific issues

For these and other brochures, go to: [nationalMSsociety.org/brochures](http://nationalMSsociety.org/brochures).

### IOMSRT

For more resources and information about rehabilitation and MS, contact the International Organization of MS Rehabilitation Therapists (IOMSRT). Visit [iomsrt.ms-care.org](http://iomsrt.ms-care.org) to learn more.



### CAN DO MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

To learn about CAN DO Multiple Sclerosis, a lifestyle empowerment program for your patients, go to [MSCanDo.org](http://MSCanDo.org).



## Breaking News

Effective August 13, 2012, malignant multiple sclerosis will be added to the Social Security Administration Compassionate Allowance Listing. Social Security has an obligation to provide benefits quickly to applicants whose medical conditions are so serious that their conditions obviously meet disability standards.

Get the full details at [www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances](http://www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances).

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