



## **Cognitive Exacerbations in MS**

### **Featuring: Dr. Anthony Feinstein & Dr. John Deluca**

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#### **Dr. John Deluca**

So if you have MS, you're familiar with exacerbations. Uh, exacerbations tend to be defined primarily physically. Or they could be visual, as well. Uh, but I think what we really miss are the cognitive exacerbations. Um, they're hard to recognize. Sometimes all of a sudden you don't feel like things are right. Um, and that, how do we capture that? And sometimes I think people couple that with fatigue, for example. They're feeling tired, and therefore, just, "I'm just not feeling right." So that's where you get this, this coupling of cognition and fatigue. I think we need to figure out how we can get these cognitive exacerbations and figure them out.

#### **Dr. Anthony Feinstein**

So there are some patients whose primary difficulty will be cognition, that physically they may show no signs of--of—of dysfunction but their, uh, disability relates to cognition and what you do see in those patients is, on occasion, a step-wise deterioration in the cognitive abilities which begs the question, have they had relapse that's linked primarily to cognitive function?

I think the answer is unknown. To try and tease it out, one would have to be able to capture brain imaging probably at that point in time and see to what degree new brain lesions or contrast enhancing lesions can be linked to the step-wise deterioration in cognitive ability. I think if you could make that connection, then you could argue quite persuasively that what you're looking at over here is something that is a cognitive relapse.

So if you are worried about your cognition, then you need to go and see a neuropsychologist or a neuropsychiatrist, someone who is skilled in—in assessing cognition.