A therapeutic strategy based on proactive monitoring and shared decision-making

To describe the development of consensus policy recommendations on diagnosis, Disease understanding, diagnostic criteria, treatment options and monitoring

Merck Serono, Novartis, Oxford PharmaGenesis, Protein Discovery Laboratories, Roche, Synthon, Teva Neuroscience and UCB; and has received grant/research support from Bayer HealthCare, Biogen, Genzyme-Sanofi, Merck, Merck Serono and Novartis;

Teva Canada; and has received grant/research support from Biogen Idec, EMD Serono, Genzyme, NIH, Novartis, Ono, Roche, and Teva; and has received grant/research support as a PI on clinical trials with Biogen, Chugai, Oxford PharmaGenesis and Teva;

K Costello has nothing to disclose. H Butzkueven has received consulting fees from Biogen, Genzyme, Merck, Novartis, and Teva; and has received grant/research support from Merck, Genzyme, and Novartis. S Dhib-Jalbut has received consulting fees from Bayer, Genentech, Genzyme, Oxford PharmaGenesis, Serono and Teva.

Medical

A literature survey guided by the lead author of the report (Professor Giovannoni) and supported by professional medical writers examined
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definitions of disease activity
barriers to accessing disease-modifying therapies (DMTs)

A report containing policy recommendations was developed by multidisciplinary author and working groups comprising clinicians, researchers, speciality nurses, health economists and representatives from patient organisations.

The author group (10 people) developed an outline, participated in structured consensus conferences on March 2 and May 22, 2015, reviewed and contributed to all four drafts and approved the final report.

The working group (14 people) participated in the second conference and contributed to two drafts and the version for approval.

The report, Brain health: matters in multiple sclerosis, was published on October 6, 2015. This marked the public launch of the ongoing MS Brain Health initiative (Figure 1).

Each of 18 individual recommendations is directed towards at least one of: clinicians, specialist nurses and their professional bodies; patient organizations; healthcare providers; IT/ITL; reimbursement agencies; insurance carriers; regulatory authorities; hospitals; and MS Brain Health champions and endorsing organizations in more than 40 countries.

The six strategic steps shown are part of an overall plan to encourage the widespread adoption of the MS Brain Health approach and recommendations.

Policy and recommendations

The report recommends that, in order to facilitate the therapeutic strategy, the following steps be undertaken:

Minimize delays in diagnosis of MS and in the time to treatment initiation

Set up a system to track and ongoing management that will optimise outcomes for every person with MS

Consult the most robust evidence base possible when making treatment and management decisions

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The policy recommendations are aimed at a range of stakeholders who can influence
MS Brain Health champions and endorsing organizations in more than 40 countries
MS Brain Health material aimed at patients and advocates has been proactively
shared by endorsers and other individuals on social media.

The MS Brain Health Trust account has gained over 1000 followers and
245 000 tweet impressions.

MS Brain Health champions and endorsing organizations in more than 40 countries (Figure 2) are positioned to share and publicise the report and its recommendations at a local level.

Presentations to healthcare professionals have been given at nine meetings in five continents; many of these arose as a result of personal approaches from neurologists who are keen to speak about the recommendations and the brain health perspective on MS.

A slide deck for presentation to healthcare professionals is available, and
another for presentation to patients will be published soon.

Conclusions

Brain health: matters in multiple sclerosis, an international consensus report published in 2015, has been developed through structured discussions conducted by multidisciplinary author and working groups.

The report presents an evidence-based position for a therapeutic strategy involving proactive early referral, improved treatment access and ongoing management of disease activity.

The report is aimed at a range of stakeholders who can influence the brain health perspective on MS.

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