

# “Are we addressing the hidden symptoms in Multiple Sclerosis”? An audit of the clinical assessment of MS patients at rehabilitation clinics at Walkergate Park Centre for Neurological Rehabilitation

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## Background

- MS patients can experience a wide range of problems and symptoms during their life, some will last for a short time and others may continue or develop over a life time.<sup>(1)</sup>
- Fatigue is experienced by 90% of patients, cognitive dysfunction by 54-65% and memory problems by 55%. 50% complain of bowel dysfunction and nearly 75% experience bladder dysfunction at some stage. Depression is observed in 10-57%, pain in 28-86%, and sexual dysfunction in 70% of patients. <sup>(2,3)</sup>
- Systematic assessment of symptoms at least as an annual review would identify hidden symptoms contributing to their clinical condition.<sup>(1)</sup>

## Aims And Objectives

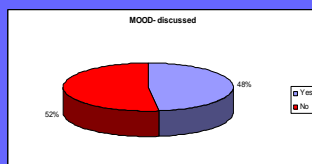
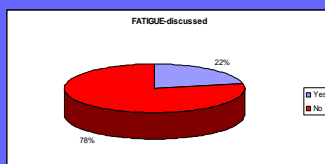
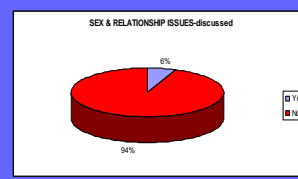
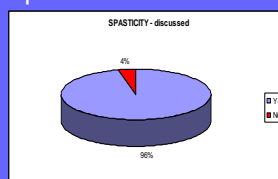
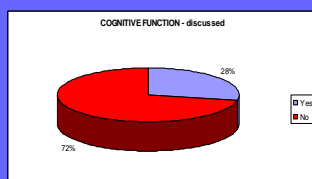
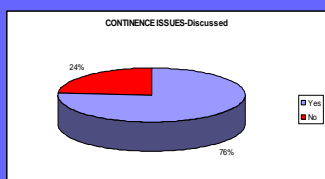
- 1)To identify compliance with NICE guidelines on the Care of patients with Multiple Sclerosis.
- 2)To improve quality of care by developing a tool for annual review of this patients.

## Method

- Retrospective analysis of Rehabilitation clinic letters & notes over 12 month period (March 2008 - Feb 09), for 50 patients with MS.

## Results

- Discussion of symptoms(% of patients) in the clinics was as follows:
  - 22% for fatigue, 76% continence issues, 28% Cognitive function, 48% mood, 42% skin integrity, 62% pain symptom, 96% spasticity, 36% speech & swallowing and 6% for sex and relationship issues.



## Conclusion

- Identification of issues such as depression, fatigue, pressure areas, cognitive dysfunction, pain, speech and swallowing , sex & relationships needs to be improved.
- If required, direct questioning should be used.
- The balance between too much questioning and not enough, and relying on patients to highlight problems or using direct questioning is an important issue.

## Recommendations

- We have developed a checklist tool of these hidden symptoms for use at annual review.
- A future audit is planned to address whether problems are picked up specifically when using checklist, rather than being volunteered by patients.

## References

1. MS. Management of MS in primary and secondary care, NICE Guideline 8, November 2003
2. Southwest Impact of MS study (SWIMS),
3. Multiple Sclerosis, Michael J. Olek

**MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS CLINIC**  
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR NEURO REHABILITATION  
WALKERGATE PARK

Multiple sclerosis symptom check list (to be checked annually with each patient)

	DATE				
• Continence – Bladder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Continence – Bowel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Cognition - Use ACE score	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Emotional disturbances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Mood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Muscle Weakness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Pain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Skin sensation change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Skin integrity/Pressure sore	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Swallowing/Speech	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Spasticity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sex and relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Tremor/ balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Current and future care needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Advance care planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>