

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is an inflammatory disease of the Central Nervous System, (CNS) which is the brain and the spinal cord.

Predominantly it is a disease of the 'white matter' tissue, which is made up of nerve fibres that transmit communication signals internally through the CNS and the nerves which supply the rest of the body.

MS is a hard condition to characterise because it is unpredictable and variable. Depending on which areas of the CNS are affected and how badly they are damaged, the type and the severity can differ greatly.

MS is a slowly progressive disease and few people, if any experience all the possible symptoms

Generally people with MS can experience partial or complete loss of any function that is controlled by, or passes through the brain and spinal cord.

Symptoms:

- Numbness, tingling, pins and needles
- Muscle weakness or spasm, spasticity, cramps, loss of balance.
- Blindness, blurred or double vision.
- Incontinence, urinary urgency or hesitancy, constipation
- Slurred speech, inability to swallow, inability to control breathing.
- Loss of balance, disabling fatigue
- Depression, short term memory

There are four main varieties of MS:

1. **Relapsing/Remitting:** This is characterised by relapses during which time new symptoms can appear and old ones resurface or worsen.
2. **Secondary progressive:** After a number of years many people who have had relapsing/remitting MS will pass into a secondary progressive phase of the disease, this is characterised by a gradual worsening of the disease between relapses.
3. **Progressive relapsing MS:** this form follows a progressive course from onset, punctuated by relapses. There is significant recovery immediately following a relapse but between relapses there is a gradual worsening.
4. **Primary Progressive:** This type of MS has a gradual progression from onset but with no remissions. This form often migrates into the brain but is less likely to damage brain areas.

FURTHER INFORMATION:
www.mult-sclerosis.org.co.uk

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