



Your Guide to the
MS Forum

Taking Basic Science
into Clinical Practice

July 2008

The MS Forum

Objectives

The *MS Forum* is a well-established organisation that provides authoritative education on the diverse and rapidly changing topic of multiple sclerosis (MS). The objectives of the *MS Forum* have remained relevant throughout its history and are to:

- Increase awareness of MS and the issues within it
- Improve understanding of MS
- Bring together workers in different disciplines in MS and encourage interaction and a mutual understanding of shared issues
- Link national groups and individuals in an international forum.

History

Since the inception of the *MS Forum* in 1993, the management of MS has changed significantly, and the whole therapeutic area has become much more active. In 2003, to reflect this situation and to achieve greater and more diverse global representation, the *MS Forum* extended its activities to include more regional meetings.

The *MS Forum* involves workers in all aspects of the management of MS and is a source of medical education programmes and materials. Topical issues in MS are regularly reviewed by the Executive Committee* and the topics considered to be timely and of high importance to practising clinicians and healthcare workers are included in the annual programme of events:

- Modern Management Workshops
- The website at www.msforum.net
- Annual symposia, usually at ECTRIMS
- Regional activities
- *MS Forum* publications including *The International MS Journal* and *MS Forum News*.

*See Appendix 1 for members of the Executive Committee

MS Forum Programme of Events

MS Forum Website

Many of the publications produced by the *MS Forum* are now available free of charge from our website. This valuable resource for all workers in the field of MS facilitates rapid and direct access to all *MS Forum* materials, in particular, the current and past issue of *The International MS Journal*, and details of future *MS Forum* events. Also included on the site are resources such as lists of recent articles on MS, links to relevant MS journals and congress information. The website has recently been redesigned to improve the menus and the system for ordering *MS Forum* items. Visit it at: www.msforum.net.

Modern Management Workshops

The Modern Management Workshops gather together small groups of experts by invitation to discuss particular topical issues in MS. The *MS Forum* Executive Committee chooses the subject of each workshop, and selects participants who are acknowledged experts in that particular aspect of MS. These workshops cover a wide range of MS-related topics, but ultimately, the goal from each is to focus on improving MS treatment and management practices.*

The MS Forum Annual Symposia

The annual symposia provide opportunities to discuss topical issues in an open forum, thus supporting the educational aims of the *MS Forum*. To date, symposia have taken the form of plenary sessions or satellite meetings at appropriate congresses.

Many of the symposia have included audience feedback via interactive keypads. Several have also featured case studies with delegates voting on various issues such as diagnosis and treatment options.†

*See Appendix 2 for workshops that have taken place.

† See Appendix 3 for symposia that have taken place.

Regional MS Forum Activities

In recent years, regional *MS Forum* activities have been organised to increase the forum's global audience and involve a wider range of people with an interest in MS. To date, the *MS Forum* has been represented in regional activities in Europe, North and South America, the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region (see box, right). Further activities are planned through 2008/2009, and the *MS Forum* invites interested physicians to propose topics for discussion and debate in their region. Further information on these regional activities is available on the website.

MS Forum Publications

From each workshop, *MS Forum* monographs are published that distill the authoritative detailed information from the presentations and discussions to a form that is easy to read and readily available to neurologists and those with an interest in MS. Slide kits based on the content of the workshops are a recent innovation that promote the key points in a clear and alternative medium.

Of special note are the proceedings of the 1994 workshop: *Cytokine Networks in Multiple Sclerosis*, published in *Neurology* (1995; **45** [Suppl 6]: S1–S55); the publications from the third symposium: *New Treatments for Multiple Sclerosis – A Review of Clinical Trial Results*, which details the clinical trial results and implications of the three trials published at that time, and also from the fifth symposium, *Clinicians and People with Multiple Sclerosis – Views on Multiple Sclerosis and its Management* which includes discussions and analysis of the data obtained from an *MS Forum* questionnaire.

Copies of these publications are available on request (msforum@msforum.net) or from the *MS Forum* website (www.msforum.net).

Pan-Asia Conferences

MS Across Continents: Insights from Asia and the Middle East

Bangkok, Thailand, 2003. This was one of the first such conferences to be held in this region and reviewed MS in Asia including disease course, natural history, genetics, diagnosis and treatment

MS Across Continents: Challenging our Knowledge of MS in Asia and the Middle East

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, 2004. The participants endorsed a series of regional consensus statements on classification, diagnosis and management of MS

MS Across Continents: Advances in the Knowledge of MS in Asia

Sydney, Australia, 2005. Recent advances in MS management were discussed

Multiple Sclerosis in Asia Pacific: Tackling Issues, Optimising Management

Seoul, South Korea, 2006. The delegates discussed optimising management of MS in the region and outstanding issues relating to accurate diagnosis of the disease.

Multiple Sclerosis in Asia-Pacific: Evolution or Revolution?

Taipei, Taiwan, 2007. At this conference the AQP4 controversy was reviewed and presentations and discussions took place on the topic of maximising the window of opportunity in MS Therapy. In addition, an educational course on the pathology of MS, diagnosis and treatment was held.

Canadian MS Forum Meeting

Newfoundland, Canada, 2004. The epidemiology of MS in Newfoundland, diagnosis and the ethics of placebo in clinical trials were discussed and delegates participated in case study workshops on women's issues in MS and strategies for long-term users of interferon.

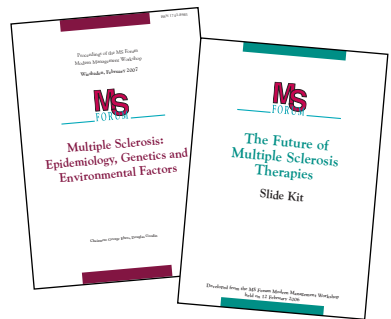
MS Forum Europe Meetings

MS Across Europe: Maximising MS Management

Rome, Italy, 2006. The first *MS Forum* Europe meeting specifically for European neurologists, reviewed motivation in MS with didactic presentations, case studies and breakout groups.

MS Across Europe: MS Management at the Cutting Edge

Windsor, UK, 2007. Extensive discussions were held on the clinically isolated syndrome patient, long-term treatment, optimal disease control and future MS therapy.



The International MS Journal

The *International MS Journal* is a highly respected review journal that has adopted a multi-disciplinary approach, publishing articles that:

- Provide critical reviews of key areas of MS management and research
- Provide news and views from the *MS Forum* and the MS community in general
- Are aimed at hospital and primary-care professionals involved in the treatment and management of MS
- Are rigorously peer-reviewed.



The journal publishes topical features including editorials, research developments, clinical trials, commentary on recent publications, expert commentaries and reports. The Editorial Board encourages submission of appropriate manuscripts. The *International MS Journal* is indexed in Medline, Excerpta Medica (EMBASE), SIMID and e-psyche and is generally published three times a year. For convenience, links are provided from Medline/PubMed. Subscriptions and a sample copy of the journal are available from the publisher, Cambridge Medical Publications (cmp@parexel.com).*

MS Forum News

For a more rapid and easy-to-read update on the *MS Forum* and its activities, this regular electronic newsletter is available free of charge from the *MS Forum* website or automatically via e-mail by entering your details on the website. The newsletters summarise regional activities in Latin America, Canada and Asia-Pacific region, *MS Forum* workshops and symposia, and news and updates concerning the *MS Forum*. Recent issues have covered topics including:

- Summary of the *MS Forum* Symposium and report on the *MS Forum* exhibit stand at ECTRIMS, 2007
- Report on *MS Forum* Modern Management Workshop, Budapest, March 2008
- Report on *MS Forum* Europe Meeting, Windsor, January 2007
- Future *MS Forum* Activities
- Recent *MS Forum* Publications
- *MS Forum* update
- Diary dates for 2008



*See Appendix 4 for members of the Editorial Board

Other MS Forum Activities

The *MS Forum* aims to be innovative in providing education through a range of formats. In recent years, these include interactive CD-ROMs containing educational programmes, and exhibits at major neurological congresses.

Several interactive CD-ROMs have been produced from *MS Forum* Symposia. For example: ECTRIMS 2001, *Is it Multiple Sclerosis?* and ECTRIMS/ACTRIMS 2002, *Controversies Across Continents*.

The *MS Forum* also provides individualised educational experiences at international congresses. The history of MS management over the 10 years since the *MS Forum's* inception was reviewed in a poster maze at the *American Academy of Neurologists (AAN) Annual Meeting* in 2003. Furthermore, in 2006, an educational exhibit stand was developed for the AAN meeting in San Diego, USA, and the ECTRIMS meeting in Madrid, Spain. This stand included workstations where delegates participated in interactive case studies involving patients with possible MS. The participants solved 'mysteries' concerning diagnosis and the timing of treatment. Evidence-based comments were provided by *MS Forum* Executive Committee members via videos and several were present in person to answer questions. This concept will be further developed for future exhibit stands.



Endorsements

In 2006, the *MS Forum* was honoured to be asked to provide its materials for use as part of a Masters course in MS that is being run by Leeds Metropolitan University, UK. This is the first such course to be available in the UK and is intended for qualified health professionals involved with, or likely to be in contact with people who have MS and those working in care and support services.

The *MS Forum* welcomes input and suggestions from physicians and healthcare professionals on regional and international activities. Please contact the *MS Forum* Secretariat at msforum@msforum.net.

Support for the MS Forum

The *MS Forum* and its activities are supported by an educational grant from Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals of Montville, New Jersey, USA.

Appendix 1

MS Forum Executive Committee

Chairman: Douglas Goodin, San Francisco, USA
Committee: Barry Arnason, Chicago, USA
Douglas Arnold, Montreal, Canada
David Bates, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK
Michel Clanet, Toulouse, France
George Ebers, Oxford, UK
Sten Fredrikson, Stockholm, Sweden
Ralf Gold, Göttingen, Germany
Hans-Peter Hartung, Düsseldorf, Germany
Reinhard Hohlfeld, Munich, Germany
Ludwig Kappos, Basel, Switzerland
Ioannis Milonas, Thessaloniki, Greece
Xavier Montalban, Barcelona, Spain
Takahiko Saida, Kyoto, Japan
Ernest Willoughby, Auckland, New Zealand

Appendix 2

MS Forum Workshops

The Diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis
The Symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis and their Management
Cytokine Networks in Multiple Sclerosis
Psychosocial Factors in Multiple Sclerosis
Genetic Factors in Multiple Sclerosis
Design and Interpretation of Clinical Trials in Multiple Sclerosis
Biosynthesis of Myelin – Consequences for Remyelination Strategies
Imaging in Multiple Sclerosis
New Insights in Immunological Tolerance Mechanisms
Environmental Factors in Multiple Sclerosis
Mechanisms of Action and Clinical Effects of Beta Interferon in Multiple Sclerosis
Pathology and Clinical Features of Multiple Sclerosis
The Future of Clinical Trials in Multiple Sclerosis
Surrogate Markers of Clinical Disease in Multiple Sclerosis
Early Management of Multiple Sclerosis
Neuroprotection in Multiple Sclerosis
Motivation in Multiple Sclerosis
The Future of Multiple Sclerosis Therapies
Multiple Sclerosis: Epidemiology, Genetics and Environmental Factors
Cognition in Multiple Sclerosis

Appendix 3

MS Forum Annual Symposia

- Diagnostic Challenges in Multiple Sclerosis I – 5th ENS, Munich, Germany, 1995
Diagnostic Challenges in Multiple Sclerosis II – 2nd EFNS, Rome, Italy, 1996
New Treatments for Multiple Sclerosis – A Review of Clinical Trial Results – 13th ECTRIMS, Istanbul, Turkey, 1997
The Practical Management of Multiple Sclerosis – 14th ECTRIMS, Stockholm, Sweden, 1998
Clinicians and People with Multiple Sclerosis: Views on Multiple Sclerosis and its Management – 15th ECTRIMS / 4th ACTRIMS, Basle, Switzerland, 1999
Clinical Challenges in Multiple Sclerosis – 16th ECTRIMS, Toulouse, France, 2000
Is it Multiple Sclerosis? – 17th ECTRIMS, Dublin, Ireland, 2001
Controversies Across Continents – 2nd Joint Meeting of ACTRIMS / ECTRIMS, Baltimore, USA, 2002
New Approaches: MS Management 10 years on – 19th ECTRIMS, Milan, Italy, 2003
MS Management in Complex Cases – 20th ECTRIMS, Vienna, Austria, 2004
Long-term Treatment of Multiple Sclerosis – 21st ECTRIMS / 10th ACTRIMS, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2005
Diagnostic Dilemmas: Treatment Decisions in Multiple Sclerosis – 22nd ECTRIMS, Madrid, Spain, 2006
Management Strategies in Atypical Cases of Multiple Sclerosis – 23rd ECTRIMS, Prague, Czech Republic, 2007

Appendix 4

Editorial Board of *The International MS Journal*

- Editor-in-Chief: Douglas Goodin, San Francisco, USA
Clinical Editor: Michel Clanet, Toulouse, France
Scientific Editor: Reinhard Hohlfeld, Munich, Germany
Editorial Board: Barry Arnason, Illinois, USA
Douglas Arnold, Montreal, Canada
David Bates, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK
George C Ebers, Oxford, UK
Irina Elovaara, Tampere, Finland
Oscar Fernández y Fernández, Malaga, Spain
Cesare Fieschi, Rome, Italy
Sten Fredrikson, Stockholm, Sweden
Ralf Gold, Göttingen, Germany
Hans-Peter Hartung, Düsseldorf, Germany
Michael Hutchinson, Dublin, Ireland
Kenneth Johnson, Maryland, USA
Ludwig Kappos, Basel, Switzerland
Hans Lassmann, Vienna, Austria
Ioannis Milonas, Thessaloniki, Greece
Xavier Montalban, Barcelona, Spain
Chris H Polman, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Takahiko Saida, Kyoto, Japan
Klaus V Toyka, Würzburg, Germany
Ernest Willoughby, Auckland, New Zealand