About Multiple Sclerosis
Media Fact Sheet

What is multiple sclerosis (MS)?
Multiple sclerosis is a chronic disorder that disrupts the normal functioning of the brain, optic nerves and spinal cord through inflammation and tissue loss. MS patients can experience a cumulative loss of physical (e.g. walking) and/or cognitive (e.g. memory) function over time, which impacts their daily and working lives.

This loss of function in MS is driven by two main types of damage that result in the loss of neurons and brain tissue – distinct inflammatory lesions (referred to as focal damage); and more widespread inflammatory neurodegeneration processes (referred to as diffuse damage).

How common is MS?
Up to 2.3 million people worldwide are affected by MS. It is most often diagnosed in younger people between the ages of 20 and 40, and two times as many women have MS as men. The incidence of MS varies geographically, and is more common in areas further away from the equator.

What are the types of MS?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Relapsing-Remitting MS (RRMS)</th>
<th>Secondary-Progressive MS (SPMS)</th>
<th>Primary-Progressive MS (PPMS)</th>
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<td>Characterized by attacks (relapses) with worsening neurological function, followed by periods of remission where patients partially or fully recover.</td>
<td>Characterized by gradual worsening of neurologic function (accumulation of permanent disability) between relapses. 80% of people with RRMS will develop SPMS 15 years after being diagnosed. A person who has been on treatment during the initial relapsing-remitting phase of the disease will likely continue on the same therapy unless it is no longer doing an adequate job of controlling disease activity.</td>
<td>Symptoms gradually get worse over time, rather than appearing as sudden attacks. ~10% of people diagnosed with MS will have PPMS. Currently there are no therapies available for treatment of PPMS.</td>
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~85% of people with MS are initially diagnosed with this form of MS.

There are several treatment options and management approaches for people with relapsing forms of MS, including injections, infusions and oral formulations.

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Disability over time for each type of MS.
What is the impact of MS?
The evolution of MS results in an increasing loss of both physical and cognitive function. This can significantly impair the quality of life of the individual and their families, although appropriate treatment and disease management can help reduce its impact.

- **Reduced quality of life**: People with MS experience a lower quality of life on average than those with other chronic diseases such as diabetes and epilepsy.
- **Issues with employment**: Only ~50% of people with MS will be employed 10 years after diagnosis and two-thirds say having MS has affected their job.
- **Reduced independence**: About one-third of people need a wheelchair within 20 years of developing MS.

How is MS treated?

- **Disease-Modifying Therapies (DMTs)**: These types of therapy attempt to alter the natural course of MS by modifying the immune response. There are DMTs available that can reduce the frequency of relapses, delay the accumulation of physical disability and minimize brain shrinkage (brain volume loss). Whilst a decade ago, the only DMTs available were injectable, there are now other options such as infusions and oral formulations (tablets or capsules).
- **Symptomatic treatments**: There are therapies available to treat individual MS symptoms, such as spasticity or problems walking. Corticosteroids can be used for the acute treatment of relapses.

People with MS should speak to their doctor about right treatment and management options for them.

References: