

INTRODUCTION

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is the most common non-traumatic neurological illness that affects younger and middle-aged adults. It is a chronic inflammatory demyelinating disease of the central nervous system, frequently involving the cerebral hemispheres. The disease is estimated to affect 300,000 to 350,000 persons in the United States. Treatment has been primarily geared toward physical symptom management, through the use of medication. However, MS affects all aspects of an individual's life. Thus, comprehensive rehabilitation must go beyond symptomatic treatment of physical symptoms, and include interventions for the cognitive, psychosocial, behavioral, affective, and vocational consequences of MS.

The first article reviews the recent research and advances being made in medication management of MS symptoms. The next article provides a review of the cognitive changes frequently observed in individuals with MS, followed by a paper on the

latest research on muscle strength and cardiopulmonary fitness. The next four articles are designed to provide overviews and practical information on specific areas of intervention. These include the psychosocial, affective, and behavioral manifestations; legal and vocational issues; sexuality, and the influence of stress on everyday life. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, we were not able to publish the paper entitled: "Meeting the Neurologic and Rehabilitation Needs of Multiple Sclerosis Patients: A Comprehensive Team Approach." We hope to include this article in a future issue of *NeuroRehabilitation*.

It is hoped that bringing together such a wide array of issues that affect individuals with MS into one volume will illustrate the need for comprehensive and effective "treatment of the 'whole' person."

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