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Why are patients with multiple sclerosis not offered disease-modifying treatment, or choose to refrain from treatment?

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Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic neurological disease, and the cause of MS remains unknown. There is no cure for MS, but several disease-modifying treatments (DMT) are available to prevent disease progression for patients with relapsing remitting MS (RRMS). A national guideline recommended that patients with RRMS should be offered DMT to prevent further disability due to MS. A total of 11,000 people are living with MS in Norway today, and about 50% of the MS patients are using DMT. A study performed at a University Hospital in Norway, a total of 837 patients (female 560, male 277) had RRMS. Of this population, 750 (90%) patients had been offered DMT. For not being offered DMT, reasons were stabile MS, uncertainty about fulfilling the criterion for DMT, and unknown reason. Female gender and high age at inclusion were risk factors for not being offered DMT. Reasons for not using DMT were related to adverse events, pregnancy, generally not want to use, stabile MS and unknown reasons. A high adherence to the national guideline in the department was seen, by 90% of the RRMS patients were offered DMT. It is known that patients treated with DMT early in the disease course had delayed long-term disability, but DMT initiated late in the disease course gave better prognosis compared to patients never treated, and due to this knowledge, it is important to offer DMT also for older MS-patients with RRMS.

Biography

Randi C Haugstad pursued Master's Degree in Evidenced based Practice. She is a Specialist Nurse in Neuronursing. She is employed by The National Competence Center for multiple sclerosis (MS) of Haukeland University Hospital in Norway and has been working with patients suffering from MS for more than 25 years. She is the coauthor of several international posters about MS. She is also a coauthor on 2 papers in reputed international journals and has published several articles in Norwegian journals regarding MS. She is an Editorial Member in several boards regarding MS in Norway.