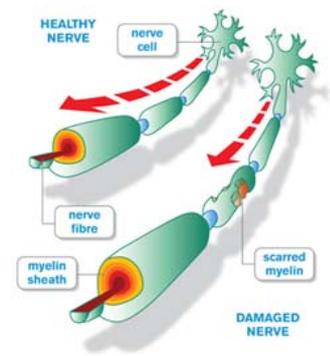


## MS Training Session

### What is MS?

Multiple Sclerosis is an autoimmune condition affecting the central nervous system, where the body's immune cells attack its own cells in the nervous system. This causes what is called demyelination of the nerve fibre. The myelin sheath is the protective outer covering necessary to transmit messages from the central nervous system to the tissues, muscles, organs and glands. Once demyelination occurs it causes hardening of the tissues (sclerosis) and this can occur in a number of sites in the brain (multiple) affecting different neural pathways eg optical, muscular skeletal, bladder and/or bowel.



### What are the causes of MS?

The causes of MS are not clearly understood but factors such as genetic disposition, environmental, and altitudes all may play a part. A reaction to a virus hidden in the CNS has been long suspected, but not proven.

### What types of MS are there?

In general three typical patterns of MS can be recognised:

- Relapsing-remitting MS—relapses with a flare up of old symptoms or the development of new ones (over several days or weeks) are followed by a remission with resolution or reduction of symptoms.
- Secondary-progressive MS—after an initial course of relapsing/remitting MS, there is the development of slowly progressive disability (over several years). In this phase relapses may also still occur.
- Primary-progressive MS—in about 10% of cases, right from the beginning there is slow progressive worsening of symptoms and disability without distinct attacks.

### What are the symptoms of MS?

The symptoms range broadly and can be very different from one person to another. Some people will only experience mild symptoms and others may be extreme. Most symptoms of MS usually occur in a pattern of relapse followed by a period of remission. Symptoms may include any number of the following:

- Sensory symptoms such as numbness or tingling
- Vision problems
- Fatigue
- Balance issues
- Speech slurring
- Neuralgia (pain)
- Muscle spasm/stiffness/heaviness/weakness
- Memory/concentration issues
- Emotional/mood implication eg depression/anxiety
- Bladder and/or bowel disturbances

### How is MS diagnosed?

Generally a neurologist would diagnose MS and often refer to a MRI and lumbar puncture tests to help with the diagnosis.

