Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic disease that attacks the central nervous system (the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves). The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS cannot be predicted. MS is a lifelong disease for which a cure is yet to be found; however, doctors and scientists are making discoveries about the treatment and management of MS every day.

**KEY FACTS & FIGURES ABOUT MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS**

- Over 2.8 million people are living with MS worldwide.
- Average age of diagnosis is between 20-40 years.
- 3 out of 4 Australians diagnosed with MS are women.
- MS affects more young adults than any other acquired chronic neurological disease.
- 1-2 Australians are diagnosed with MS every day.
- More than 33,300 Australians live with MS.
- 85% RELAPSING REMITTING MS (RRMS)
- 12% PRIMARY PROGRESSIVE MS (PPMS)
- 3% UNKNOWN MS DISEASE TYPE
- Many people diagnosed with RRMS will eventually develop secondary progressive MS (SPMS).

**GENERAL FACTS ABOUT MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS**

**COMMON SYMPTOMS OF MS**

The symptoms of MS can be both visible and invisible to others, are unpredictable and vary from person to person and from time to time in the same person.

- Changes in memory, concentration or reasoning
- Dizziness and vertigo
- Visual disturbance, such as blurred or double vision
- Extreme tiredness (unusual fatigue)
- Emotional and mood changes
- Pain
- Sexual changes
- Bladder and bowel changes
- Sensitivity to heat and/or cold
- Slurring or slowing of speech
- Visual disturbance, such as blurred or double vision
- Slurring or slowing of speech
- Altering sensation, such as tingling, numbness or pins and needles
- Altered muscle tone, such as muscle weakness, tremor, stiffness or spasms
- Difficulties with walking, balance or coordination
- Changes in memory, concentration or reasoning
- Dizziness and vertigo
- Visual disturbance, such as blurred or double vision
- Extreme tiredness (unusual fatigue)
- Emotional and mood changes
- Pain
- Sexual changes
- Bladder and bowel changes
- Sensitivity to heat and/or cold

**FORMS OF MS AT DIAGNOSIS**

- 85% RELAPSING REMITTING MS (RRMS)
- 12% PRIMARY PROGRESSIVE MS (PPMS)
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The symptoms of MS can be both visible and invisible to others, are unpredictable and vary from person to person and from time to time in the same person.
THE ECONOMIC AND PERSONAL COST OF MS

MS is estimated to have cost the Australian community $2.449 billion in 2021.

In 2021, the average cost of MS* per person was $73,457.

*Comprising both individual and societal costs

Of all the various categories that comprise the total cost of MS, lost wages now account for only 29% of the economic burden of MS compared to almost 50% in 2010.

Quality of life for people with MS who are living with severe disability is 41% lower compared to people with MS with no disability.

On average, in 2017, the quality of life of people with MS in Australia is 31% less than that of the overall Australian population.

This substantially reduced quality of life is primarily driven by the impact of MS on pain, independent living, mental health and relationships.

The prevalence of MS

The prevalence of MS in Australia has increased from 103.7 per 100,000 people in 2017 to 131.1 per 100,000 people in 2021. This increase in prevalence is most likely due to changes in exposure to known MS risk factors.

Global experts believe that addressing the impact of smoking, Vitamin D deficiency, obesity and glandular fever could prevent 60% of MS cases.

62% of people with MS are using a disease modifying therapy*, an increase of 35% since 2010.

*A drug designed to reduce the number and severity of relapses and slow or halt the progression of their MS

If there was a vaccine against the Epstein-Barr virus* 90% of MS cases might be prevented.

*the virus that causes glandular fever

Tasmania has twice the prevalence of MS than that of Queensland

Prevalence (P) of MS per 100,000 people and total number (T) of people with MS

WA
P: 114.3
T: 3040

NT
P: 61
T: 142

SA
P: 163.1
T: 2905

QLD
P: 107.3
T: 5535

NSW
P: 121.2
T: 9783

ACT
P: 170.5
T: 775

VIC
P: 153.3
T: 9969

TAS
P: 212.7
T: 1186

Quadruple that of a long-term cancer survivor.