

## Refined Pathways to Cures Roadmap published in Multiple Sclerosis Journal

**Updated Roadmap defines current research priorities based on new knowledge of the disease**

**04 SEPTEMBER 2024:** The Multiple Sclerosis Journal has published the next iteration of [The Pathways to Cures Roadmap](#), which outlines research areas with the greatest potential to stop MS, restore function and repair damage from the disease, and end MS through prevention. The updated Roadmap accounts for recent scientific advances and provides recommendations which could accelerate progress toward cures through enhanced global collaboration.

The original [Pathways to Cures Roadmap](#), which was published in 2022, was refined during a global summit of nearly 200 academic and industry scientists, healthcare providers, policy makers, funders and people with MS from 15 countries. More than 30 MS Societies, Allied Groups and professional organizations have [endorsed](#) the Roadmap.

In addition to outlining the research needed for each specific pathway (Stop, Restore, and End), the Roadmap also identifies key factors that will accelerate research progress, including lowering barriers to global data sharing, enhancing collaboration, committing to sustained funding, engaging regulators and payers to ensure access to research breakthroughs, engaging people with MS, and committing to health equity and inclusion in the global MS movement.

Bruce F. Bebo Jr., PhD, lead author of the updated Pathways to Cures Roadmap paper and Executive Vice President of Research, National MS Society says we continue to make important advances in MS research since the first Roadmap was published, which is why we brought together experts from around the world to help update research progress and priorities

“Curing MS will take a global effort, and for the first time, many of these global MS organizations are aligning their research agendas to the refined Pathways to Cures Roadmap, giving us all a better opportunity to uncover treatments and cures more quickly,” Mr Bebo said.

MS Australia CEO Rohan Greenland says that as a partner and joint leader in this important global initiative, MS Australia remains steadfast in its commitment to collaborating with other MS organisations to fast track the cures for MS.

“The updated Roadmap is a reflection of the advancements being made in the area of MS Research and our increased understanding of the disease, and in turn, the need, not just for an updated roadmap, but continued international collaborative research efforts that will get us down the pathways to cures as fast as possible,” Mr Greenland said.

As part of the Roadmap update, a [Global Landscape Assessment](#) was conducted to better understand the MS research currently funded by governments and MS advocacy organizations. The Assessment was also published in the Multiple Sclerosis Journal, highlighting the distribution

and topics of more than 2,300 research projects valued at nearly \$2 billion, and beginning to suggest where the MS community should focus to increase potential impact for current and future research.

Kathy Smith, KES Business Consulting, LLC, and a contributing author of the original Pathways to Cures Roadmap says the greater emphasis on enhancing collaboration – not just with other MS organizations, but with other fields as well – will open up doors for so many discoveries that will change lives.

“Just knowing that the MS research community continues to focus on cures and adjust based on new findings, brings those of us living with this disease so much hope that we are closer to a cure every day,” Ms Smith said.

Alvaro Cobo-Calvo, PhD, neurologist at the Multiple Sclerosis center of Catalonia (CEMCA), and Mar Tintoré, PhD, president ofECTRIMS, authored an [editorial piece](#) in the publication, highlighting the importance of these papers.

“The strategies outlined in both articles published in this issue of the *Multiple Sclerosis Journal* provide a clear and comprehensive approach to tackling MS from multiple angles. The complementary survey highlights the current funding landscape and stresses the importance of international collaboration and transparency in funding. Addressing the barriers to data sharing and ensuring sustained funding are critical steps toward accelerating MS research. By focusing on these areas, we can drive significant advancements in the quest to cure MS, ultimately improving the lives of those affected by this debilitating disease.”

Both papers and the editorial piece can be found in the September issue of [Multiple Sclerosis Journal](#), and will soon be available to access without payment.

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**About MS**

MS is the most common acquired chronic neurological disease affecting young adults, often diagnosed between the ages of 20 to 40 and, in Australia, affects three times more women than men. As yet, there is no cure. There is no known single cause of MS, but many genetic and environmental factors have been shown to contribute to its development.

In MS, the body's own immune system mistakenly attacks and damages the fatty material – called myelin – around the nerves. Myelin is important for protecting and insulating nerves so that the electrical messages that the brain sends to the rest of the body, travel quickly and efficiently.

As the myelin breaks down during an MS attack – a process called demyelination – patches of nerves become exposed and then scarred, which renders the nerves unable to communicate messages properly and at risk of subsequent degeneration. This means that the brain cannot talk to other parts of the body,

resulting in a range of symptoms that can include a loss of motor function (e.g., walking and hand and arm function, loss of sensation, pain, vision changes and changes to thinking and memory).

### **About MS Australia**

MS Australia is Australia's national multiple sclerosis (MS) not-for-profit organisation that empowers researchers to identify ways to treat, prevent and cure MS, seeks sustained and systemic policy change via advocacy, and acts as the national champion for Australia's community of people affected by MS.

MS Australia represents and collaborates with its state and territory MS Member Organisations, people with MS, their carers, families and friends and various national and international bodies to:

- Fund, coordinate, educate and advocate for MS research as part of the worldwide effort to solve MS
- Provide the latest evidence-based information and resources
- Help meet the needs of people affected by MS.