

(P04) PATIENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON QUALITY MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

David Rintell, EdD¹; Debra Frankel, MS, OTR²; Sarah Minden, MD³; Bonnie Glanz, PhD¹

¹Partners Multiple Sclerosis Center, Boston (MA, USA); ²National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NY, USA); ³Department of Psychiatry, Brigham and Women's Hospital (MA, USA)

Background: Although the existence and prevalence of mental health problems among people with multiple sclerosis (MS) have been well documented, little is known about the mental health care received by MS patients. This qualitative study adopted a patient-centered approach to explore patients' experiences of mental health care.

Methods: We convened focus groups at four MS centers to identify the aspects of mental health care that were important to people with MS. All patients (n = 54) in the focus groups had received some type of mental health care in the past year. Data were analyzed by coding comments under specific themes.

Results: Patients wanted prompt intervention after diagnosis and ongoing screening for mental health problems; providers with knowledge about MS and experience working with people with MS; mental health services that were available at an MS center; and inclusion of family members in treatment.

Conclusions: Mental health care should be provided as soon as possible after diagnosis with regular screening and interventions that include family members as indicated thereafter. Mental health care providers should be familiar with MS, collaborate with neurologic care providers, and provide services on site at MS centers.

Supported by: National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Disclosure: David Rintell has received honoraria for speaking at educational programs sponsored by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS). He serves on the Clinical Advisory Committee of the Central New England Chapter of the NMSS. Sarah Minden is currently an employee of the NMSS, although she was not an employee during the funding period of the grant.