

## **KEY FINDINGS FROM TWO NEW MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SURVEYS**

*Conducted by Harris Interactive for the National MS Society and Acorda Therapeutics*

### **☛ Experience with MS Symptoms**

About 2 in 5 people with MS report difficulty walking\*; nearly two-thirds of MS care partners report caring for someone with MS who has difficulty walking. Both difficulty walking and fatigue (the most commonly reported symptom) are at least somewhat disruptive to the daily lives of most people with MS who experience them at least twice a week.

- ☑ 64% of people with MS report they experience trouble walking (35%), the inability to walk (13%), or losing balance (54%) at least twice a week.
  - 41% of people with MS report they have trouble walking or the inability to walk at least twice a week
- ☑ Among those who experience inability to walk at least twice a week, 74% say it is disruptive (11%) or very disruptive (63%) to their overall daily life.
- ☑ Among those who have trouble walking at least twice a week, 63% say it is disruptive (35%) or very disruptive (28%) to their overall daily life.
- ☑ 64% of MS care partners say the family member or friend with MS they care for experience difficulty walking, of whom:
  - 51% experience trouble walking at least twice a week
  - 27% experience an inability to walk at least twice a week.
- ☑ Among those who experience fatigue at least twice a week, 60% say it is disruptive (31%) or very disruptive (29%) to their overall daily life.

*\* Difficulty walking was defined as having trouble walking or the inability to walk two or more times per week.*

### **☛ Impact of Difficulty Walking on People with MS**

Difficulty walking negatively impacts the emotional health and social relationships of most people with MS who experience this symptom. Among people with MS who have difficulty walking, most say difficulty walking:

- affects their emotional health (69%)
  - restricts their activities significantly (82%)
  - negatively impacts their ability to carry out daily tasks (70%) a great deal (29%) or a little (41%)
  - negatively impacts their self-esteem (69%) a great deal (30%) or a little (39%)
  - negatively impacts their intimate relationship with spouse or dating partner (58%) a great deal (26%) or a little (32%)
- ☑ Over one third (37%) of people with MS who have difficulty walking had to modify their house including installing a stair lift or ramp (24%).

### **☛ Impact of MS on Quality of Life**

When first diagnosed, more people with MS say they were concerned about the impact MS would have on their quality of life than pain from MS or potential costs.

- ☑ Many people with MS say that in the past 6 months, MS symptoms have had at least some negative effect on their ability to do household chores (70%), shop (61%), exercise or participate in physical activities (60%) and travel (45%).
- ☑ At first diagnosis, 75% of people with MS said they were concerned about the impact of MS on their spouse or family life and 78% were concerned about restricting activities because of MS.
- ☑ When first diagnosed, 43% of people with MS said they were concerned about pain, and 55% of people with MS said they were concerned about cost of care for their MS.
- ☑ 62% of people with MS say someone assists them with household responsibilities such as laundry, dishes, cleaning, and yard work.

### **☛ *Mobility Devices***

Most people with MS who use a mobility device value their devices and view them as a way to maintain independence. However, a minority of people with MS who use mobility devices express some discomfort about using them.

- ☑ Among people with MS who use a mobility device:
  - about 7 in 10 say they do so in order to get around on their own (71%) and to help maintain some independence (67%)
  - a vast majority (92%) agree that using a mobility device is “worth it” to be able to live their lives with two-thirds (65%) strongly agreeing
  - nearly 2 in 5 (37%) say they are embarrassed when they use their mobility device
  - one third (36%) says they don’t use their mobility as much as they should

### **☛ *Impact of MS on Finances***

Difficulty walking, specifically, has resulted in an increase in daily expenses related to MS for many people with MS.

- ☑ About half (54%) of people with MS and a quarter (27%) of MS care partners say that MS has interfered with their ability to work, such that they have personally suffered a loss of personal income.
- ☑ Half of people (50%) with MS who have difficulty walking say it increased their daily MS-related expenses by a lot (18%) or a little (32%).
- ☑ Nearly 3 in 5 (59%) MS care partners whose family member or friend has difficulty walking say that difficulty walking has increased the cost of MS-related expenses for their family member or friend by a lot (29%) or a little (30%).

### **☛ *Exercise and MS***

Exercise appears to play a positive role in the lives of most people with MS, with most who are exercising reporting that it has had a positive impact on their quality of life.

- ☑ About a quarter (74%) of people with MS participate in sports-related or physical activities or exercise, with close to half (45%) exercising at least once a week.
- ☑ Among people with MS who exercise:
  - 7 in 10 people with MS decided on their own to exercise, as opposed to 30% who currently exercise because their doctor recommended it as part of their therapy
  - 85% say exercise has had a little (46%) or a great deal (38%) of positive impact on their quality of life

### **☛ *MS Care Partner Experiences***

Most MS care partners are optimistic about their role. MS care giving responsibilities seem to be most often assumed by a family member or a significant other.

- ☑ A vast majority of MS care partners say that:
  - they are coping well with their care giving responsibilities (91%)
  - caring for a family member or friend with MS made them a stronger person (85%)
- ☑ Most (78%) MS care partners say they are involved in the care of a spouse or significant other (35%), parent (24%), or other relative (18%).
- ☑ About two-thirds of MS care partners (69%) say that friends or other family members have helped them cope with their family member or friend’s MS.

### **About the Study**

The two surveys were conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive of behalf of the National MS Society and Acorda Therapeutics, between January 28 and February 25, 2008. One survey was among 1,011 U.S. adults who had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and a separate survey was among 317 U.S. adults who are currently somewhat or very involved with caring for a family member or friend with multiple sclerosis. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.