

# Research Reporter



Welcome to the October 2023 edition to our guide to what's new in MS science

## Research Round up

### July: Connection between risk factors for heart health and brain volume



Using data from the [MS-STAT2 trial](#), researchers looked at the connection between heart and blood vessel health and MS. They focused on risk factors that we can influence, like [smoking](#) or blood pressure.

They found this cardiovascular risk was connected to lower brain volume, a sign for loss of nerve cells, in people with secondary progressive MS.

Growing evidence suggests the health of your heart and blood vessels could play an important role in MS outcomes. But we don't know for sure whether higher cardiovascular risk is the culprit that causes these things. It could be that it's the other way around. Or that something else causes both.

[Read more about this study on our website](#)

### August: Self-reported information could help predict MS progression



Researchers used information people recorded about physical disability in the UK MS Register, to look at how MS progresses.

Using just self-reported information, the researchers could see more advanced disability years before participants had a clinical diagnosis with progressive MS. So, the level of disability around the time of diagnosis could be an indicator of how

people's condition will progress.

This new research highlights how registries like the UK MS Register could help people with MS in the future. Self-reported information from people with MS has the potential to be used to make predictions about how someone's MS might progress.

[Read more about this study on our website](#)

### September: Tighter checks mean people with MS in the UK less likely to be prescribed DMTs



A new study has revealed significantly fewer people are prescribed DMTs in the UK, compared to four other European countries. The researchers identified key reasons for this. One is the tighter checks in place in the UK for people to access DMTs on the NHS.

In the UK, there are more regular reviews for DMTs. Guidance issued by NICE or similar bodies determines if a DMT is considered appropriate for a person's specific diagnosis and stage of MS. Prescriptions will be regularly reviewed after initiation to check a treatment is still appropriate as a person's MS progresses. Other countries in the study don't do this as much.

In fact, the researchers found if the other countries did similar monitoring and audit, their DMT use would fall. So while fewer people in the UK might be on DMTs, it might be that more people are on the right DMT.

[Read more about this study on our website](#)

## Meet the Researchers



Research Assistants Nimmy Sidhu and Hiba Adan are working on a new intervention to help people with MS with their fatigue. They told us how they're making sure that everyone's voice is heard.

They're part of the team delivering a new research programme called [REFUEL-MS](#). REFUEL-MS is an app-based digital treatment. It aims to help people develop new ways of managing their fatigue day-to-day.

[You can read more from Nimmy and Hiba on our website](#)

## International Progressive MS Alliance Scientific Congress

We're a founding member of the [International Progressive MS Alliance](#). A key goal of the Alliance is to better understand what drives progression in MS.

In July, the Alliance held their Annual Scientific Meeting. During a global webcast on ending MS progression, international MS experts came together to discuss advances and challenges in progressive MS research. A really interesting discussion

[Watch the recording of the global webcast recording on YouTube.](#)

[Read more about the research from our Director of Research and External Affairs, Dr Sarah Rawlings](#)

## Following the trial trail



### ChariotMS

ChariotMS has now recruited 100 participants. This puts them halfway towards their recruitment goal. A huge thank you to everyone who made this possible! Tina Morris was the hundredth person to join.

Tina said: **“When I was told I was the hundredth person to be eligible for ChariotMS I couldn't believe it! My family are all so pleased too – it's wonderful. The trial is really exciting. When I think there are some 130,000 people in the UK who have MS I feel very privileged to be part of it.”**

ChariotMS is testing whether the drug cladribine can help people with advanced MS keep the use of their arms and hands. ChariotMS is open for recruitment at 20 sites across the UK.

Email the trial team at to find out more: [chariot@gmul.ac.uk](mailto:chariot@gmul.ac.uk)

### Octopus

[Octopus](#) is our revolutionary mega-trial. Now, recruitment has started in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. You can look at [the Octopus website](#) to see locations of sites.

If you're interested in taking part in Octopus, you can [register your interest through the UK MS Register](#). When you register, you'll be asked where you live. This is so the closest trial sites can contact you when they start recruiting. For most people, this won't happen for quite a while. Trial sites are still getting set up and there's now over 2000 people have already registered their interest.

If you'd like to know more about our research – get in touch!  
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