



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS NURSES

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IOMSN Town Hall Teleconference Series

Title : **Psychosocial Resources for the MS Nurse**
Date : **March 15, 2011**
Speaker : **Brant J. Oliver, NP, MSN, MPH**

SUMMARY:

Thirty-six nurses participated in an informative introductory session on psychosocial issues in multiple sclerosis. MS nurses have an important role in identifying and addressing psychosocial issues in MS, and are often the first and/or only members of the MS care team to address them. During this highly interactive session, the group discussed psychosocial issues of importance, methods to assess for these, as well as how psychosocial issues can impact the biomedical aspects of MS care. Particular focus was placed on economical and efficient ways to effectively screen for psychosocial issues, including depression, fatigue, self-efficacy, social support, sexual functioning, general mental status, and cognition.

The discussion of screening methods prompted dialogue on a number of issues including the following:

- (1) the practical application of psychosocial screening measures in various clinical settings;
- (2) scoring and interpretation of screening results;
- (3) the difference between screening and diagnosis of psychosocial problems;
- (4) optimal timing to employ screening;
- (5) translation of screening instruments into other languages;
- (6) advocacy uses of screening results (such as medication prior authorizations or disability applications, etc.);
- (7) limitations of screening instruments;
- (8) potential for collaborative multi-center studies of psychosocial issues in MS using screening data;
- (9) the use of screening results to help guide referral planning; and
- (10) use of screening data for self-monitoring and self-efficacy boosting effects in MS self-management using mobile technologies.

There appears to be a significant amount of interest in further discussion of psychosocial issues in MS, and many participants offered valuable insights to the group that should be explored in future learning sessions. Future discussions of psychosocial issues could touch upon a number of areas, including advocacy for psychosocial issues, creating feed-forward data systems for real-time outcomes monitoring for management of psychosocial issues, collaborating on psychosocial research, and exploring biomedical-psychosocial interactions in MS.

On behalf of the faculty and planners for this session, I would like to thank our nursing colleagues who participated in this session, as well as IOMSN for organizing and facilitating this event. I strongly encourage MS nurses to continue to participate in this important and valuable Town Hall teleconference series.