



Mobility Matters! Campaign Launched To Highlight Importance Of Impaired Mobility In Multiple Sclerosis

Over half of patients say their quality of life is affected by decreased mobility¹

17th October 2011 – According to new research released today, 54% of patients with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) are very or extremely affected by decreased mobility in terms of their quality of life¹. The research was announced at the launch of a new campaign supported by Biogen Idec and MS Ireland entitled 'Mobility Matters in MS'. Mobility impairment is one of the most physically and emotionally disruptive aspects of MS as it restricts daily life, can result in a loss of independence and can affect a patient's ability to work. To support the campaign, a new website www.mobilitymattersinms.ie, has been developed, providing advice and encouragement to people with MS on how to maintain and increase their mobility.

Over 7,000 people and families live with MS across Ireland². MS is a progressive neurological condition that can affect a person's health, lifestyle and relationships. While mobility is the main factor affecting patients' day-to-day living, the condition also greatly impacts other areas of their lives. 55% of respondents say they are extremely / very affected by decreased daily living activities¹, 54% say they are extremely / very affected by decreased mobility¹ and 53% claim to be very / extremely affected by decreased sexual function¹.

Speaking at the launch of the campaign today, Ava Battles, Chief Executive of MS Ireland said ***"MS Ireland welcomes the launch of Biogen Idec's Mobility Matters in MS campaign. Through our 'Getting The Balance Right' programme we have delivered thousands of physiotherapy and exercise related programmes we really understand how important mobility is for people with Multiple Sclerosis. The Mobility Matters in MS website is a valuable resource for patients and healthcare professionals alike, as well as carers, family and friends. The site has a combination of practical tips on managing everyday tasks, as well as advice on what people with MS can do to be as mobile as possible."***

TV broadcaster and Newstalk host Síle Seoige is lending her support to the campaign: ***"Since coming on board for the Mobility Matters in MS campaign, I've met a number of people with MS and have learned first-hand the challenges they face every day, especially doing simple things that so many of us take for granted. I'm delighted to support the campaign as I now realise how important it is for people with the condition to try to manage their MS effectively so that their mobility is restricted as little as possible."***

The research unveiled today demonstrates the impact impaired mobility can have on a patient's quality of life, with respondents citing issues such as the 'inability to do simple tasks', 'impact on relationships', 'having to plan ahead' and the 'dependence on others' as key factors¹.

Consultant Neurologist Chris McGuigan at St Vincent's University Hospital Dublin said ***"People with MS can improve their mobility in many ways. Apart from maintaining their general health in terms of diet and exercise, it's important for them to recognise the areas, which are posing the greatest challenges so that they can be addressed. Common problem areas with mobility include balance, poor vision and impaired sensation in feet and legs. Access to structured physical and occupational therapy, with additional medication where appropriate, can help improve safety when walking."***

Mobility is also a key issue for patients staying in work. Among those who participated in the research, as many respondents were unemployed (22%) as those in full-time employment (also 22%)¹. Walking impairment also greatly affects patients' work or study, with 48% saying they were extremely affected by their loss of employment or academic position¹, and 37% saying they were extremely affected by a change in their employment or academic status¹.

David Nestor, Senior Country Manager for Biogen Idec said ***"We are delighted to launch the 'Mobility Matters in MS' campaign. In addition to effective therapies, MS patients need access to a multi-disciplinary approach to the best management of their condition, so areas such as physiotherapy, counselling and lifestyle advice all play a role. We hope the campaign plays a part in highlighting the importance of mobility and provides people with MS with valuable information on how best to manage mobility issues."***

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References:

1. MS Patient Mobility Survey – Ireland. Allmarket Research Ltd. August 2011. Research involved a sample size of 164 respondents who qualified to complete the survey.
2. MS Ireland website - <http://www.ms-society.ie/pages/living-with-ms>

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