

MULTIPLE SYSTEM ATROPHY (MSA)

MSA is a life-limiting, adult-onset neurodegenerative disease. MSA is often known as an “atypical Parkinsonism” because of overlapping symptoms with Parkinson’s. It is caused by an abnormal build-up of alpha-synuclein in brain cells, like what happens in Parkinson’s disease.



PREVALENCE

It is estimated that 2-5 people per 100,000 have a MSA diagnosis. These are likely underestimates because many people with MSA are misdiagnosed with another condition.



PROFOUND IMPACTS OF MSA

The average life expectancy of MSA is 8-10 years, nearly half that of Parkinson’s. Seeking a diagnosis consumes a third of this time. The emotional, physical and financial tolls of the disease on families are immense and require heavy utilization of healthcare resources.

SYMPTOMS AND DIAGNOSIS

A clinical diagnosis is made through a neurological exam, medical history, brain imaging and ruling out other conditions. Confirmation of MSA can only be made through a post-mortem study of brain tissue.



ISSUES WITH WALKING, BALANCE, POSTURE AND COORDINATION



DRY EYES AND DOUBLE VISION



DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING, LEADING TO RISK OF CHOKING AND LUNG INFECTIONS



SLURRED, STRAINED OR WEAKENED SPEECH



AUTONOMIC DYSFUNCTION, SUCH AS BLOOD PRESSURE ISSUES, BLADDER CONTROL AND SLEEP APNEA

The list of symptoms above is not exhaustive and the presentation/progression of MSA is very individual.

RESEARCH: KNOWLEDGE GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The cause of MSA is unknown and there are no FDA-approved treatments for MSA at this time. There is an urgent need and opportunity to work together to:

Raise awareness of MSA to cut down time to diagnosis and getting the right care

Find reliable diagnostic markers of MSA (e.g., wearable devices, blood test, brain imaging)

Determine environmental and genetic risk factors for MSA

Develop effective treatments and, ultimately, a cure!



TREATMENT AND CARE

Currently, there is no known cure and there are no treatments to prevent MSA or slow the progression. Levodopa therapy, developed for Parkinson’s, is often used but may offer limited benefit. Medications, exercise and therapies are focused on safety and management of symptoms.



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CurePSP is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to the awareness, care and cure of progressive supranuclear palsy, corticobasal degeneration and multiple system atrophy. Science, community and hope are at the heart of CurePSP’s mission and all of our services. For more information, please visit www.curepsp.org or contact Jessica Shurer, MSW, LCSW, Director of Clinical Affairs and Advocacy, at shurer@curepsp.org