

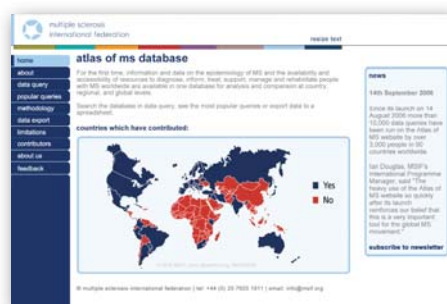
MSIF Atlas of MS Website Compares MS Data Worldwide

On August 14, 2006, the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MSIF) launched the Atlas of MS, a major interactive website presenting data gathered by MSIF and the World Health Organization (WHO). It illustrates the epidemiology of multiple sclerosis (MS) and the availability of resources to diagnose, treat, support, care and campaign for people with MS in different countries around the world. The data, which can be analysed and compared at a country, regional, or global level for 62 countries, is available at www.atlasofms.org.

Data was gathered via a questionnaire created by the Atlas of MS Work Group, comprising of international experts and people affected by MS. The responses are organised into themes and presented in maps and graphs (with the facility to download the underlying data). Themes covered are:

- epidemiology of MS
- services and support for people with MS
- the diagnosis of MS
- management of MS
- treatment of MS
- quality of life of people with MS

Within each theme, users can search for and compare data on a number of variables and regions. For example, under epidemiology, prevalence of MS or the ratio of males to females with MS can be viewed by country, region or



worldwide. Or, for the management of MS, data for the number of neurologists or nurses per 100,000 people can be viewed. To date, more than 30,000 data queries have been run by over 5,100 people in 98 countries.

Paul Rompani, MSIF's Deputy Chief Executive, said "We are thrilled with the Atlas of MS website and the opportunities it offers to improve the quality of life of people with MS worldwide. The information presented confirms that resources for MS diagnosis, treatment, care and support vary widely between countries. Furthermore, MSIF aims to expand the breadth of the Atlas of MS replacing impressions and opinions with facts and figures. We hope that the realities uncovered by the Atlas will motivate patient organisations and other campaigners to press governments and healthcare providers to improve MS treatment and care worldwide."

The Atlas of MS is a growing and evolving project, and data will be updated on an ongoing basis. This will include securing representation from countries that have not yet submitted data, and updating existing entries with the most up-to-date information incorporated as it is received. Furthermore, we aim to expand the breadth of the Atlas, with data being gathered for new categories and sub categories as and when necessary (for example when a new treatment becomes available). In addition, a 'snapshot' of the database will be taken at the end of each year to allow medium-term analysis of developments in the themes covered.

The survey results will also be used to produce a combined MSIF/WHO publication, authored by members of the Atlas of MS Work Group. As well as presenting data, the publication will include brief reviews of selected topics which summarise medical, lifestyle, social and economic issues affecting people with MS. The Atlas of MS publication will be available in April 2007.

For more information on the MSIF Atlas of MS website and/or the development of the MSIF/WHO Atlas of MS publication, please contact Lucy Hurst, Information and Communications Manager, on lucy@msif.org

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