

## **“Women & Their MS Journey” Survey Data Fact Sheet**

*Below are results from a survey conducted for Teva Pharmaceuticals by Wakefield Research (www.wakefieldresearch.com) on August 11-30, 2017. The survey was conducted among 1,000 women in the United States ages 18+ diagnosed with MS in the last 5 years, using an email invitation and an online survey. The margin of error for the survey was +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.*

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The goals of the survey were to better understand the key concerns women had at the time of their multiple sclerosis (MS) diagnosis, and what kind of communication they had with their healthcare team about these issues. Overall, the survey revealed MS raises significant concerns for women about how their diagnosis will impact certain areas of life, including **work, relationships** and **family planning**. Yet, despite their concerns about these critical lifestyle issues, so many questions and conversations go unsaid:

- 98% of women diagnosed with MS in the last five years did not feel all of their worries in these areas were addressed with their healthcare team at the time of diagnosis
- 71% of women said they believe talking to their doctor or other healthcare professional earlier or more openly would have made their first six months after diagnosis easier.
- Top concerns following diagnosis included:
  - Ability to care for themselves (34%)
  - Career/work life (17%)
  - Caring for their current or future children (22%) and ability to have children (15%)
  - Personal relationships (13%)

### **MS is Unpredictable; Many Worry About its Impact on Work**

- 93% of women agreed they thought the course of their career and work life would be significantly better if they had known more information at the time of their diagnosis, yet some **didn't speak to** any of the following healthcare providers about their concerns:
  - A nurse (80%)
  - Their primary care physician (67%)
  - A neurologist (65%)
  - Or any other HCP (59%)
- For working women, the impact of an MS diagnosis on their professional life weighs heavily on them, with 52% of those employed at the time of diagnosis concerned they would be physically unable to keep working. Others worried:
  - Their opportunities for career advancement would be limited (50%)
  - Colleagues would treat them differently (50%)
  - Future finances would be unstable (50%)
- Among those women with MS who were employed at the time of their diagnosis, they wished they had discussed:
  - Where to find information about their legal rights at work (51%)
  - What they should/shouldn't share about their MS at work (48%)
  - Options to help them continue working (47%)
  - How to make sure their quality of work didn't suffer (45%)

- Women with MS may also need to be more vocal, especially when it comes to advocating for their physical needs. Among those employed at the time of their diagnosis, they wished they had asked about:
  - The ability to modify working conditions (51%)
  - The ability to work fewer hours (48%)
  - Increased healthcare benefits (48%)
  - Wellness programs (42%)

### **Relationships Can be Tricky Enough without Adding MS to the Mix**

- 50% of women said they wished they had asked about intimacy with a partner and 31% said dating with MS is a topic they would have liked to discuss.
- 86% of women surveyed who were single at the time of their diagnosis were concerned their MS diagnosis would impact their ability to find a significant other. For women who had a significant other 58% were concerned their relationship would be negatively impacted.
- Women also longed for guidance at the time of diagnosis about how to:
  - Talk about MS with their family and children (52%)
  - How to talk about MS with a significant other (51%)
  - How to accept help from family/friends (51%)
- Among women who were concerned their relationships would be negatively impacted because of their MS, a significant number **didn't speak to** any of the following people about their concerns at the time of their diagnosis:
  - Nurse (78%)
  - Neurologist (62%)
  - Other healthcare provider (59%)
  - Primary care physician (57%)
- Thirty-eight percent of women reported not feeling comfortable talking with their doctor about these topics as the reason why they didn't.

### **MS Affects Women of Childbearing Age More Than Any Other Age Group, and They Have Family Planning Concerns**

- According to the survey, having a family is important to 94% of women diagnosed with MS, but 69% expressed concern at diagnosis that they would not be able to have children. Of those with concerns, more than half did not speak to a neurologist (59%) or their primary care physician (51%).
- Although MS is not considered to be hereditary, the top family planning concern among 59% of newly diagnosed women was the possibility of passing it on to their children.
- Additional family planning concerns included:
  - Ability to care for their children (58%)
  - Ability to have a healthy pregnancy (50%)
  - Ability to conceive (48%)
- Despite concerns at the time of diagnosis, a significant number of women **didn't speak to** any of the following people about their concerns:
  - Nurse (78%)
  - Neurologist (59%)
  - Primary care physician (51%)
  - Other healthcare provider (55%)

- For the 52% of women with MS who did have a conversation with their healthcare professional about family planning, their first conversation lasted 10 minutes or less.

### **Teva and 'Can Do MS' Are Bridging the Gap**

- Doctor and patient conversations are the cornerstone of great care, and that's especially true and necessary for those suffering from MS. To empower newly diagnosed women to take charge of their MS, Teva and 'Can Do MS' developed tools to help women and their HCPs engage right from the start about the topics that matter to women. The resources can be found at [mscando.org/womenandms](http://mscando.org/womenandms).

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