

Demographic Variations of Multiple Sclerosis Patients between Britain and Kuwait

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Abstract : Introduction: Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, progressive and degenerative disease that affects the central nervous system (CNS). MS has been described to result in the debilitating symptom of the disease. It is reported to have a negative impact on the patient's mental activities, brings a lower quality of life, leads to unemployment, causes distress and psychological disorders, generates low levels of motivation and self-esteem, and result in disability and neurological impairment. The aim of this study was to compare the effects of MS on patients from Britain and Kuwait. Methodology: A questionnaire was distributed to 200 individuals with MS (100 Kuwaiti and 100 British). The questionnaire consists of three parts; 1. General demographics, 2. Disease-specific data (symptoms, severity levels, relapse frequency, and support system), and 3. Attitudes towards physical exercise. Results: A response rate of 62% from the British sample and 50% from the Kuwaiti sample was achieved. 84% of the sample (n=52) were 41 years old or over. The duration of the disease was less than 10 years in 43.4% of British and 68% of Kuwaiti respondents. The majority of British respondents (56.5%) reported the disease severity to be moderate, while the majority of Kuwaitis was mild (72%). The annual relapse rates in Kuwait were relatively low, with 82% of the Kuwaiti sample had one relapse per year, compared to the 64.5% of British. The most common symptoms reported by British respondents were balance (75.8%), fatigue (74.2%), and weakness (71%), and by Kuwaiti respondents were fatigue (86%), balance (76%), and weakness (66%). The help and support for MS were by far more diverse for the British than Kuwaiti respondents. Discussion: The results unveiled marked differences between two groups of British and Kuwaiti MS patients in terms of patients' age and disease duration, and severity. The overwhelming majority of Kuwaiti patients are young individuals who have been with the disease for a relatively short period of time, and their MS in most cases was mild. On the other hand, British patients were relatively older, many have been with the disease for a long period of time, and their average MS condition was more serious than that of their Kuwaiti counterparts. The main support in Kuwait comes from the neurologist, who primarily prescribe medications and advise patients to try to be active. The Kuwaiti respondents thought that lack of encouragement was the main reason for them not to engage in social activities.

Keywords : multiple sclerosis, Kuwait, exercise, demographic

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