



MS RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING PAST 10 YEARS

MS research continues to advance knowledge of the disease and treatment for people with MS. There is much greater understanding of this unpredictable, often disabling disease. Many of those accomplishments have taken place in the past 10 years thanks to the support of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada and its sister national MS societies around the world, many governments and private industry. Here are some key advances:

- **There are treatments for some types of multiple sclerosis.**
 - They are useful in relapsing MS
 - Their impact on development of disability still not clear

- **Researchers have developed “windows” into the disease through technology.**
 - MRI scanning assists doctors in diagnosing MS more quickly
 - Canadians are leaders in MRI and other magnetic resonance technology to measure disease activity within the central nervous system

- **We have evidence myelin can and does regrow spontaneously which indicates repair is possible.**
 - Myelin repair and regrowth takes place in the early stages of MS
 - Studies are underway using the body’s own cells to repair myelin

- **Investigators have a better understanding of the nature of MS which means some types of MS can be more effectively managed. This is because of :**
 - Studies of MS tissue (pathology)
 - Studies of the immune system (immunology)
 - Studies of the way MS naturally progresses without treatment (natural history studies)

- **Scientists have identified key molecules responsible for initiating the abnormal immune system response in MS.**
 - Identifying the “culprits” will lead to better therapies

- **There is understanding that both genetic and environmental factors are important in the cause of MS.**
 - More than one gene is involved
 - The excess of MS in some families is due to genetic factors
 - A major genetic study is taking place in Canada

- **Studies have found that MS is a costly disease.**
 - The cost of MS is higher than many other diseases because it lasts a lifetime
 - Most of the cost of MS is borne by people with MS and their families
 - The cost of the disease is greater the more disabled a person becomes