

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AT CHILDREN

Samaa Faez Khudhur*

¹Faculty of Science, University of Thi-Qar, Iraq.²Department of Pathological Analysis.

*Corresponding Author: Samaa Faez Khudhur

Faculty of Science, University of Thi-Qar, Iraq.

Article Received on 25/02/2025

Article Revised on 18/03/2025

Article Published on 07/04/2025

ABSTRACT

Multiple sclerosis is the most important immune-mediated demyelinated disease of human which is typically the disease of young adults. A total of 4% to 5% of MS population are pediatric. Pediatric MS is defined as the appearance of MS before the age of sixteen. About 80% of the pediatric cases and nearly all adolescent onset patients present with attacks typical to adult MS. Approximately 97% to 99% of the affected children have relapsing-remitting MS, while 85% to 95% of the adults experience such condition. MS in children is associated with more frequent and severe relapses. Treatment is the same as adults. We aimed to review the epidemiology, etiology, clinical manifestations, and treatment of MS in children.

KEYWORDS: Neuron, immunology, Children; Medication, demyelinating disease Autoimmune disease, vitamin D.

1. INTRODUCTION

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is the most important immune-mediated demyelinated disease of the human-beings.^[1] The earliest record of MS dates back to 1837, when Carswell and Cruveilhier separately described the histological lesions of MS in the central nervous system (CNS).^[1,2] Frerichs was the first who made the clinical diagnosis of MS in the patients in 1840. A few years later, Kober identified abnormal oligoclonal bands in the spinal fluids of the MS patients.^[3] In 1868, Charcot was the first who described associations between the symptoms of MS and the pathological changes in postmortem samples.^[4] In 1965, National MS Society set up a panel of professionals in order to provide a standard guideline for MS diagnosis.^[1] In 1916, Dawson provided the definite histological account of the disease.^[5]

Several retrospective studies were published in 1990 and 1968 that reported that some people with MS had neurological symptoms during their teenage years.^[6] MS is typically triggered by the disease in young adults. MS in children is considered to be MS that appears prior to the 16th year. Its prevalence is markedly different by region: it is between 1.35 and 2.5 per 100.000 in the U.S., and over 248 per 100.000 in western Canada.^[7,8] About 5% of patients present prior to the age of 16, while less than 1% do so prior to the age of 10.^[6,9] The female to male ratio is different by age and is 0.8:1 under the age of 6, 1.6:1 between the ages of 6 and 10, 2.1:1 over 10 years, and 3:1 during adolescence. The most common age of onset in children is around 12-13

years.^[8,10]

2. Pathogenesis

The illness is a disorder of the immune system that results in brain injury. Both genetic propensity and environmental components are necessary for the onset of the disease. It's been theorized that the development of MS is facilitated by individuals who are genetically predisposed and have been exposed to triggers during the vulnerable period.

3. Genetic Susceptibility

Research on monozygote twins indicates a 25% concordance for the onset of multiple sclerosis. Dizygote twins have a risk rate of roughly 2% to 5%, which is comparable to that of first-degree relatives.^[11,12] Additionally, it has been demonstrated that a higher risk of multiple sclerosis is linked to specific Human Leukocyte Antigen (HLA) genes, such as HLA-DRB1, 1501, DQA 0102, and DQB1 0602. Early-onset MS has a substantial correlation with HLA DR15.^[11,13]

4. Obesity As Well As Diet

Being overweight may be linked to an upsurge of MS in youngsters. Two case-control studies discovered that children with MS had a higher body mass index than controls, and this correlation was particularly prevalent in girls.^[14,15] Furthermore, a case-control study revealed that children with MS had greater body mass index (BMI) trajectories not just at diagnosis, but also in early childhood, years before the disease's clinical onset.^[16]

Adipocytes produce adipokines, which impact immune system function.^[17] Obesity has been related to poor vitamin D levels¹⁸ and early menarche.^[14] While there is a major interest in dietary factors (e.g., sodium intake) and the risk of MS, there have been no definitive connections found with MS risk in youngsters.^[19,20]

5. Environmental Hazardous Factors

Latitude

There is a subtle change in MS prevalence with latitude. Latitudinal gradients have been identified all across the world, including Europe^[21], North America^[22], Australia^[24], New Zealand^[25], and Japan.^[26] There was no considerable gradient detected in Canada^[27] or Argentine Patagonia^[28], however the latitude range over population regions was rather small. Italy and Scandinavia's highest latitude regions exhibit an inverse gradient^[29-30], however this is mitigated when the incidence of HLA genotype variants between North and South is taken into account.^[31]

There is a distinct focus of high incidence in Sardinia, which has been attributed to genetic isolation and a founder effect.^[30,32] As previously mentioned, there is some evidence that twin concordance and recurrence risk within families may be impacted by latitude.^[33,34]

At Norway, inland agricultural regions have an increased prevalence of MS than fishing settlements.^[35,36] Although other factors, such as employing sunbeds, taking vitamin D supplements, or taking sunny vacations, may also play a role, it has been suggested that dietary sources of vitamin D, like oily fish, may make up for the relative lack of ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure at the highest latitudes.^[37-38] though other factors, like using sunbeds, taking vitamin D supplements, or taking sunny vacations, may also play a role.^[39]

The first genetic and latitudinal influences on MS prevalence were detected by Davenport.^[40] In a survey of men drafted to the US army he noted a prevalence for the US of 10/100,000 with higher prevalence in urban areas and among certain ethnic groups (Finns, Scandinavians). There was a latitudinal gradient with the highest prevalence seen in men from higher latitudes. It should be noted that racial distribution and latitude were not independent, with Finns and Scandinavians found most commonly at higher latitudes. In retrospect, the findings of Acheson et al.^[41] were particularly pertinent. They examined birthplace and place of residence of patients with MS discharged between 1954 and 1958. Only those hailing from counties with a population of >300,000 in 1920 were subjected to analysis (454 cases). They found significant correlations between disease prevalence and solar radiation (average annual sunshine and December solar radiation). Latitude was strongly correlated with MS prevalence, but did not have a significant independent effect. Goldberg^[42] postulated vitamin D as a possible reason for the latitude gradient. The principal source of vitamin D in humans is UVB radiation (from

sunlight) on the skin.^[43]

The intensity of UVB wavelengths that reach the Earth's surface varies with latitude and season. Assuming equal sun exposure to an equal amount of skin, reduced UVB radiation levels in winter may be insufficient to support vitamin D synthesis in some areas. Vitamin D deficiency has been documented in both the United States^[44] and Australia.^[45] For at least some of the year. Despite strong evidence that vitamin D plays a role in MS pathogenesis (discussed below), new research suggests that vitamin D level may not be the primary mediator of a latitude impact caused by UV radiation exposure.^[46]

6. Vitamin D

The term "vitamin D" is often used to refer to a group of fat-soluble secosteroids. The active form, 1,25 dihydroxyvitamin D (1,25(OH)₂D), has a wide range of actions in the human body, which are mostly mediated by its action on nuclear gene expression. The most well-known involvement is in calcium homeostasis, in which 1,25(OH)₂D and parathyroid hormone (PTH) regulate serum calcium levels by acting on bone, intestinal calcium absorption, and renal calcium output.^[47]

However, more recent research suggests that 1,25(OH)₂D plays a role in brain development and function, cardiovascular health, and musculoskeletal health. Furthermore, 1,25(OH)₂D is expected to have anti-neoplastic characteristics, modulate insulin synthesis, and exert broad immunomodulatory effects.^[48]

Vitamin D has two main forms: ergocalciferol (vitamin D₂) derived from plant matter and cholecalciferol (vitamin D₃) derived from animal sources. Vitamin D₃ is the primary vitamin D precursor in the human system. It is produced in the epidermis through cleavage of the β ring of the precursor, 7-dehydrocholesterol (pre-vitamin D₃), by solar radiation in the UVB wavelengths^[49,50] to form pre-vitamin D, which then spontaneously isomerises to vitamin D₃. Both vitamin D₃ (e.g., in oily fish) and vitamin D₂ (e.g., in irradiated mushrooms) can be derived from dietary sources, however it is less easily absorbed than vitamin D₃ and has a lower biological activity.

7. CONCLUSION

Can pediatric multiple sclerosis help us understand illness initiation and progression? As stated in the immunology part of this study, T-cell responses to central nervous system antigens in pediatric multiple sclerosis may uncover early antigenic targets and immune cell populations that are crucial in the early stages of the disease. Differentiating these traits between children with multiple sclerosis and healthy children is critical for finding disease-associated immunologic variables. Prospective studies to analyze the presence in children at risk for multiple sclerosis, particularly those with an initial demyelinating episode, may shed more light on the impact of these characteristics and find

previously unknown risk factors. Finally, therapeutic and preventive trials targeting identified immunological factors are required to conclusively confirm.

What are the disease course biomarkers for multiple sclerosis in children? The discovery of environmental risk factors, illness characteristics, and genetic risk factors for the development of multiple sclerosis in children with acute demyelinating syndromes has advanced significantly. Applying a "equation-oriented approach" to specific situations, however, might be difficult. To evaluate indicators of disease progression in children with multiple sclerosis, more research is required.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This study aims to provide clear sight about this debilitating illness which target different ages not only ebbs at certain period of individual years of life, will be helpful by comprehending implication of it and tackle exhausting impacts in more systematic rhyme surrogate to use or gulping medication which are do no more than worsen health on long termism. Combining many scientific field increase the opportunity to develop adjuvant substances more likely to enhance immune system, generate betterment of individuals health.

FUNDING

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All data used in this study are publically available and don't involve human participants or private information, ensuring compliance with ethical research practices.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Abbreviations

MS: Multiple sclerosis

CNS: Central nervous system

HLA: Human leukocyte antigen

US: United state

UV: Ultra Violet

UVB: Ultra violet b

A D EM: Acute demyelinating encephalomyelitis

CSF: Cerebrospinal fluid

REFERENCES

1. Lublin F. History of modern multiple sclerosis therapy. *J Neurol*, Sep. 2005; 252(3): iii3-iii9.

Review.

2. Murray TJ. Robert Carswell: the first illustrator of MS. *Int MS J.*, Sep. 2009; 16(3): 98-101.
3. Kabat EA, Glusman M, Knaub V. Quantitative estimation of the albumin and gamma globulin in normal and pathologic cerebrospinal fluid by immunochemical methods. *Am J Med.*, May 1948; 4(5): 653-62.
4. Kumar DR, Aslinia F, Yale SH, Mazza JJ. Jean-Martin Charcot: the father of neurology. *Clin Med Res.*, Mar. 2011; 9(1): 46-9.
5. Dawson JD. The histology of disseminated sclerosis. *Trans of the Roy Soc Edinb*, 1916; 50: 517-740.
6. Gadoth N. Multiple sclerosis in children. *Brain Dev.*, Jun. 2003; 25(4): 229-32. Review.
7. Banwell BL. Pediatric multiple sclerosis. *Curr Neurol Neurosci Rep.*, May 2004; 4(3): 245-52.
8. Renoux C, Vukusic S, Mikaeloff Y, Edan G, Clanet M, Dubois B, et al. Natural history of multiple sclerosis with childhood onset. *N Engl J Med.*, Jun. 21, 2007; 356(25): 2603-13.
9. Boiko A, Vorobeychik G, Paty D, Devonshire V, Sondovnick D. Early onset multiple sclerosis: a long longitudinal study. *Neurology*, Oct. 8, 2002; 59(7): 1006-10.
10. Yavari MJ, Inaloo S, Saboori S. Multiple sclerosis in children: A review of clinical and paraclinical features in 26 cases. *Iran J Child Neurol*, 2008; 2(4): 41-46.
11. Oksenberg JR, Baranzini SE, Sawcer S, Hauser SL. The genetics of multiple sclerosis: SNPs to pathways to Iran *J Child Neurology Vol 7 No 2* 2013 Springpathogenesis. *Nat Rev Genet*, Jul. 2008; 9(7): 516-26.
12. Willer CJ, Dymant DA, Risch NJ, Sadovnick AD, Ebers GC; Canadian Collaborative Study Group. Twin concordance and sibling recurrence rates in multiple sclerosis. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*, Oct. 28, 2003; 100(22): 12877-82.
13. Ramagopalan SV, Knight JC, Ebers GC. Multiple sclerosis and the major histocompatibility complex. *Curr Opin Neurol*, Jun. 2009; 22(3): 219-25.
14. Chitnis T, Graves J, Weinstock-Guttman B, et al. ; U.S. Network of Pediatric MS Centers. Distinct effects of obesity and puberty on risk and age at onset of pediatric MS. *Ann Clin Transl Neurol*, 2016; 3(12): 897-907. [PubMed: 28097202].
15. Langer-Gould A, Brara SM, Beaber BE, Koebnick C. Childhood obesity and risk of pediatric multiple sclerosis and clinically isolated syndrome. *Neurology*, 2013; 80(06): 548-552. [PubMed: 23365063]
16. Brenton JN, Woolbright E, Briscoe-Abath C, Qureshi A, Conaway M, Goldman MD. Body mass index trajectories in pediatric multiple sclerosis. *Dev Med Child Neurol*, 2019; 61(11): 1289-1294. [PubMed: 30950520].
17. Versini M, Jeandel PY, Rosenthal E, Shoenfeld Y. Obesity in autoimmune diseases: not a passive bystander. *Autoimmun Rev.*, 2014; 13(09):

- 981–1000. [PubMed: 25092612].
18. Brenton JN, Koenig S, Goldman MD. Vitamin D status and age of onset of demyelinating disease. *Mult Scler Relat Disord*, 2014; 3(06): 684–688. [PubMed: 25891547].
 19. Pakpoor J, Seminatore B, Graves JS, et al.; US Network of Pediatric Multiple Sclerosis Centers. Dietary factors and pediatric multiple sclerosis: a case-control study. *Mult Scler*, 2018; 24(08): 1067–1076. [PubMed: 28608728].
 20. McDonald J, Graves J, Waldman A, et al. A case-control study of dietary salt intake in pediatric onset multiple sclerosis. *Mult Scler Relat Disord*, 2016; 6: 87–92. [PubMed: 27063630].
 21. Vukusic, S.; Van Bockstael, V.; Gosselin, S.; Confavreux, C. Regional variations in the prevalence of multiple sclerosis in French farmers. *J. Neurol. Neurosurg. Psychiatry*, 2007; 78: 707–709.
 22. Kurtzke, J.F. Some contributions of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the epidemiology of multiple sclerosis. *Mult. Scler.*, 2008; 14: 1007–1012.
 23. Kurtzke, J.F.; Beebe, G.W.; Norman, J.E., Jr. Epidemiology of multiple sclerosis in U.S. Veterans: 1. Race, sex, and geographic distribution. *Neurology*, 1979; 29: 1228–1235.
 24. Hammond, S.R.; McLeod, J.G.; Millingen, K.S.; Stewart-Wynne, E.G.; English, D.; Holland, J.T.; McCall, M.G. The epidemiology of multiple sclerosis in three Australian cities: Perth, Newcastle and Hobart. *Brain*, 1988; 111(Pt 1): 1–25.
 25. Taylor, B.V.; Pearson, J.F.; Clarke, G.; Mason, D.F.; Abernethy, D.A.; Willoughby, E.; Sabel, C. MS prevalence in New Zealand, an ethnically and latitudinally diverse country. *Mult. Scler*, 2010; 16: 1422–1431.
 26. Kuroiwa, Y.; Shibasaki, H.; Ikeda, M. Prevalence of multiple sclerosis and its north-to-south gradient in Japan. *Neuroepidemiology*, 1983; 2: 62–69.
 27. Poppe, A.Y.; Wolfson, C.; Zhu, B. Prevalence of multiple sclerosis in Canada: A systematic review. *Can. J. Neurol. Sci.*, 2008; 35: 593–601.
 28. Melcon, M.O.; Gold, L.; Carra, A.; Caceres, F.; Correale, J.; Cristiano, E.; Fernandez Liguori, N.; Garcea, O.; Luetic, G.; Kremenchutzky, M. Argentine Patagonia: Prevalence and clinical features of multiple sclerosis. *Mult. Scler*, 2008; 14: 656–662.
 29. Gronlie, S.A.; Myrvoll, E.; Hansen, G.; Gronning, M.; Mellgren, S.I. Multiple sclerosis in North Norway, and first appearance in an indigenous population. *J. Neurol.*, 2000; 247: 129–133.
 30. Rosati, G. The prevalence of multiple sclerosis in the world: An update. *Neurol. Sci.*, 2001; 22: 117–139.
 31. Simpson, S., Jr.; Blizzard, L.; Otahal, P.; van der Mei, I.; Taylor, B. Latitude is significantly associated with the prevalence of multiple sclerosis: A meta-analysis. *J. Neurol. Neurosurg. Psychiatry*, 2011; 82: 1132–1141.
 32. Handel, A.E.; Williamson, A.J.; Disanto, G.; Handunnetthi, L.; Giovannoni, G.; Ramagopalan, S.V. An updated meta-analysis of risk of multiple sclerosis following infectious mononucleosis. *PLoS One*, 2010; 5: e12496.
 33. Islam, T.; Gauderman, W.J.; Cozen, W.; Hamilton, A.S.; Burnett, M.E.; Mack, T.M. Differential twin concordance for multiple sclerosis by latitude of birthplace. *Ann. Neurol*, 2006; 60: 56–64.
 34. O’Gorman, C.; Lin, R.; Stankovich, J.; Broadley, S.A. Modelling genetic susceptibility to multiple sclerosis with family data. *Neuroepidemiology*, 2012, doi:10.1159/000341902.
 35. Swank, R.L.; Lerstad, O.; Strom, A.; Backer, J. Multiple sclerosis in rural Norway its geographic and occupational incidence in relation to nutrition. *N. Engl. J. Med.*, 1952; 246: 722–728.
 36. Westlund, K. Distribution and mortality time trend of multiple sclerosis and some other diseases in Norway. *Acta Neurol. Scand*, 1970; 46: 455–483.
 37. Kampman, M.T.; Brustad, M. Vitamin D: A candidate for the environmental effect in multiple sclerosis - observations from Norway. *Neuroepidemiology*, 2008; 30: 140–146.
 38. Kampman, M.T.; Wilsgaard, T.; Mellgren, S.I. Outdoor activities and diet in childhood and adolescence relate to MS risk above the Arctic Circle. *J. Neurol*, 2007; 254: 471–477.
 39. Brustad, M.; Edvardsen, K.; Wilsgaard, T.; Engelsen, O.; Aksnes, L.; Lund, E. Seasonality of UV-radiation and vitamin D status at 69 degrees north. *Photochem. Photobiol. Sci.*, 2007; 6: 903–908.
 40. Davenport, C. Multiple sclerosis: From the standpoint of geographic distribution and race. *Arch. Neurol. Psychiatry*, 1922; 8: 51–58.
 41. Acheson, E.D.; Bachrach, C.A.; Wright, F.M. Some comments on the relationship of the distribution of multiple sclerosis to latitude, solar radiation, and other variables. *Acta Psychiatr. Scand*, 1960; 35: 132–147.
 42. Goldberg, P. Multiple sclerosis: Vitamin D and calcium as environmental determinants of prevalence (a viewpoint). Part 1: Sunlight, dietary factors and epidemiology. *Int. J. Environ. Stud*, 1974; 6: 19–27.
 43. Olick, M.F. Sunlight and vitamin D for bone health and prevention of autoimmune diseases, cancers, and cardiovascular disease. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.*, 2004; 80: 1678S–1688S.
 44. Ganji, V.; Zhang, X.; Tangpricha, V. Serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D concentrations and prevalence estimates of hypovitaminosis D in the U.S. population based on assay-adjusted data. *J. Nutr.*, 2012; 142: 498–507.
 45. Daly, R.M.; Gagnon, C.; Lu, Z.X.; Magliano, D.J.; Dunstan, D.W.; Sikaris, K.A.; Zimmet, P.Z.; Ebeling, P.R.; Shaw, J.E. Prevalence of vitamin D deficiency and its determinants in Australian adults aged 25 years and older: A national, population-based study. *Clin. Endocrinol. (Oxf.)*, 2012; 77:

26–35.

46. Lucas, R.M.; Ponsonby, A.L.; Dear, K.; Valery, P.C.; Pender, M.P.; Taylor, B.V.; Kilpatrick, T.J.; Dwyer, T.; Coulthard, A.; Chapman, C.; et al. Sun exposure and vitamin D are independent risk factors for CNS demyelination. *Neurology*, 2011; 76: 540–548.
47. Norman, A. Vitamin D receptor (VDR): New assignment for an already busy receptor. *Endocrinology*, 2006; 147: 5542–5548.
48. Norman, A. Vitamin D receptor (VDR): New assignment for an already busy receptor. *Endocrinology*, 2006; 147: 5542–5548.
49. Wang, T.T.; Tavera-Mendoza, L.E.; Laperriere, D.; Libby, E.; MacLeod, N.B.; Nagai, Y.; Bourdeau, V.; Konstorum, A.; Lallemant, B.; Zhang, R.; et al. Large-scale in silico and microarray-based identification of direct 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D3 target genes. *Mol. Endocrinol*, 2005; 19: 2685–2695.
50. Lehmann, B. The vitamin D3 pathway in human skin and its role for regulation of biological processes. *Photochem. Photobiol*, 2005; 81: 1246–1251.