What is “The State Of MS” Survey?
"The State of MS" Areas of Focus

The State of MS survey focused on **three main areas** of the MS experience:

- **Patient-Physician Communication**
  - ECTRIMS 2014

- **Treatment Expectations and Satisfaction**
  - AAN 2015

- **Treatment Challenges**
  - ECTRIMS 2015

- Conducted online 2014
- 982 patients and 900 Neurologists specialized in MS
- Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK or U.S.
High levels of satisfaction were found among both patients and neurologists in many aspects of MS communication. 

Areas for Improvement

Despite open communication, there are critical differences in the perceptions of people living with MS and neurologists when discussing MS symptoms.¹

Some MS patients report being uncomfortable discussing more typical symptoms of MS with their doctors including:¹

- **19%** Difficulty walking
- **19%** Tremors
- **18%** Muscle spasms

Neurologists tended to underestimate their patients’ discomfort talking about these symptoms often associated with the disease: 2% - 3%

While quite common, sensitive and more private symptoms emerged as the most uncomfortable for patients to discuss:¹

- **54%** Sexual difficulties
- **28%** Bladder or bowel problems
- **26%** Mood swings

Neurologists overestimate their patients’ unease talking about these more private symptoms:¹

- **87%** Sexual difficulties
- **54%** Bladder or bowel problems
- **37%** Mood swings

Communications Challenges

Time constraints are cited as the greatest barrier by neurologists—and second greatest barrier for patients—when it comes to communication\(^1\)

*47% Neurologists | 21% Patients*

Nearly 1/4 of surveyed patients (24 percent) cited not wanting to be seen as a “difficult patient” as a communication barrier\(^1\)

---

MS patients are divided when it comes to satisfaction with their current disease-modifying treatment (DMT)².

The results suggest that treatment satisfaction can be improved by understanding mutual expectations and the factors involved in choosing a DMT for MS.²

A collaborative relationship between neurologists and patients with MS should be considered when making treatment decisions²

Patients who are satisfied with treatment provide input into the treatment decision-making process²

Of the patients who are satisfied with their therapy, 69 percent characterize themselves as an equal partner or the primary/sole decision-maker in choosing their DMT²

Patient-Physician Collaboration

64% Of the patients who are satisfied with their DMT, 64 percent say they are very comfortable speaking with their neurologist\(^2\)

43% Conversely, of the patients who are less satisfied with their DMT, only 43 percent report being very comfortable speaking with their neurologist\(^2\)

What’s Needed to Help?

Techniques to support patients to remember to take their DMT may be as important as minimizing side effects. About half of patients admit to having skipped doses of their DMT.

However, patients are not always forthright when sharing this information, with 32 percent admitting they did not tell their healthcare provider.

5. Tintore, M et. al. (2015, October). P643 The State of MS: Treatment Goals and Challenges. Poster session presented at the 31st meeting of the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS), Barcelona, Spain.
The State of MS survey has sought to bring a new awareness to the diverse experiences of people living with MS and neurologists.

The results underscore the significance of establishing a strong patient-physician partnership to best understand the needs, goals and challenges of each MS patient.

The survey identified opportunities to improve upon communication between patients and physicians, treatment satisfaction and adherence to treatment as we look to continue to improve overall MS patient care.