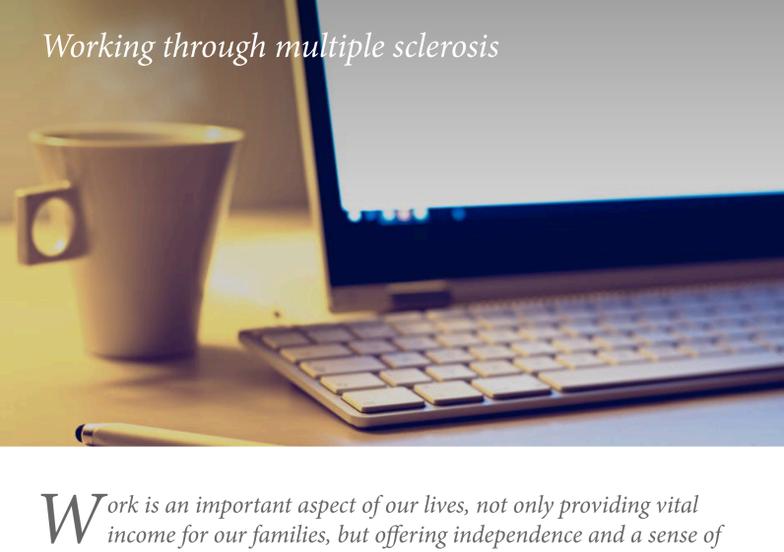


# Working through multiple sclerosis



Work is an important aspect of our lives, not only providing vital income for our families, but offering independence and a sense of accomplishment for the individual. However, a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS) can greatly affect employment and career opportunities due to the unpredictability of the disease.

Even though the nature of how we work is changing towards a more flexible approach, with advances in technology offering remote working, many people with MS still struggle to stay in work.

A diagnosis of MS does not impact skills and experience; but the symptoms caused by MS can vary and fluctuate over days and weeks, and interfere with a person's ability to work.

As the disease progresses, disability can accumulate, making it more challenging to remain in work.

## Impact on working life

Typically, MS is diagnosed in young, active people between the ages of

### 20 and 40

— prime working years — with potentially decades of employment ahead of them.<sup>1</sup>



Most people living with MS and their caregivers remain employed. Both say a diagnosis of MS has impacted their working lives.<sup>2</sup>

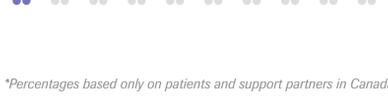
Even in the early stages of MS, ability to work can be markedly affected.<sup>3</sup>



On average, 7 months after diagnosis people with MS and their caregivers are forced to make changes at work.<sup>2</sup>

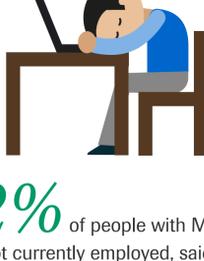


>25%  
of people with MS and their caregivers are forced to make changes at work.<sup>2</sup>



1 in 10  
caregivers need to give up work completely.<sup>2</sup>

\*Percentages based only on patients and support partners in Canada and the EU5 countries in the wave II, 2017 survey.



As the disease progresses, increased disability — such as difficulties in walking — imposes a heavy burden on people with MS and on their caregivers.

62% of people with MS, who were not currently employed, said **fatigue** was the most common symptom that prevented them from working.<sup>4</sup>

People with MS not in employment think the following adaptations would have enabled them to remain working longer<sup>4</sup>:



37%  
Flexible working hours



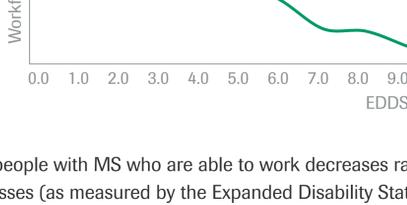
33%  
Rest during work breaks



27%  
Better awareness of MS amongst colleagues

## The cost of unemployment

MS can lead to substantial economic losses for society.<sup>3</sup> Unemployment levels among people with MS are higher than those in the general population, even at low levels of physical disability.<sup>3</sup>



The number of people with MS who are able to work decreases rapidly as their disability progresses (as measured by the Expanded Disability Status Scale (EDSS)). Once an EDSS of 9 is reached, only a few people with MS are still able to work.<sup>5</sup>

Each year, the total annual indirect costs related to productivity loss are approximately



€16,000  
for a person living with MS.

This is almost double for their caregivers —

### €31,000<sup>6</sup>

due to not being able to stay in work and the impact of being a caregiver on their work.



## The cost of MS

The average annual cost of MS per person is €40,313, which is made up of direct medical costs, indirect costs, such as loss of productivity at work and informal care costs.<sup>6</sup>

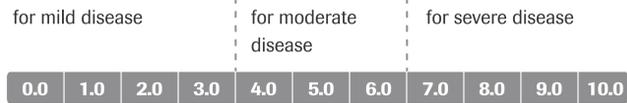


As MS progresses the total mean annual cost for a person with MS increases.<sup>6</sup>

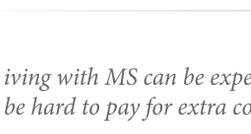
€18,000  
for mild disease

€36,500  
for moderate disease

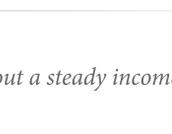
€62,000  
for severe disease



Living with MS can be expensive and without a steady income it can be hard to pay for extra costs, such as<sup>7</sup>



Transport



Specialist equipment



Medication



Help with household activities

There is currently no cure for MS, however, early disease-modifying treatment can significantly reduce disease activity and disability progression

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