



Health Bulletin




Significant Barriers Prevent People With MS From Fully Committing To Treatment

(NAPSA)—For people diagnosed with a chronic illness such as multiple sclerosis (MS), starting an effective therapy soon after their diagnosis and staying committed to their treatment may significantly slow the progression of the disease. However, a new North American survey found that despite their best intentions, the majority of people with MS face several barriers that make it hard to fully commit to therapy.

The survey, which interviewed 220 people in the United States and Canada who have been diagnosed with MS in the past five years, uncovered a number of challenges that patients face in starting and staying on their medication, including the affordability of prescription medicine (27 percent), injection-related issues and side effects (41 percent), and the difficulty of maintaining a medication schedule (9 percent).

Amy Perrin Ross, APRN, MSN, CNRN, MSCN, president of the International Organization of MS Nurses, notes that “The good news is, medication attributes that address these hurdles, such as proven efficacy, safety and flexible storage requirements and the availability of 24/7 nurse support programs and

Dr. Patricia Farrell’s Top Tips To Address Barriers To Commitment

- Use breathing exercises—They foster relaxation and help the immune system help you.
- Empower yourself with positive self-talk—Tell yourself “I can do this.”
- Counter every negative thought with a positive one about yourself.
- Think about how maintaining your health means you can achieve your goals.
- Reach out and talk to those in your support system—Talk to your MS nurse, MS support group, family and friends. If you need additional information on 24/7 nursing support through the BETAPLUS program, visit www.betaseron.com/tips. 

financial assistance, can have a vital impact in helping patients start and stay on therapy.”

When 19-year-old Jillian learned that she had MS, she started treatment right away. However, Jillian’s commitment was challenged when she lost her insurance and had trouble affording her medication. “Fortunately for me, my doctor told me that I could continue receiving my medicine through a company-spon-

sored patient assistance program. It’s one of the benefits of the BETAPLUS™† program that patients on Betaseron®* can sign up for. It was a great relief and allowed me to continue my fight against the disease.”

The survey also showed that one in five people have anxieties about injections and named “not wanting to inject myself” as a barrier to staying on treatment. To help people with MS overcome these anxieties, Dr. Patricia Farrell, a psychologist and anxiety expert, has developed tips, or “barrier breakers,” to help. According to Dr. Farrell, “It is very important to remember that people with chronic illnesses are not defined by their condition, but that it is a part of them that can be managed. Some of my other tips include breathing exercises, positive thinking and reaching out to people in a support system, like an MS nurse.”

The Barriers to Treatment Commitment survey was conducted by Russell Research and funded by Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals Inc.

For more information about MS, the BETAPLUS program and Dr. Farrell’s tips, visit www.betaseron.com/tips.



About the Survey: On behalf of Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals, Russell Research conducted a survey of 220 MS patients in the U.S. and Canada, all of whom had been diagnosed with MS in the past five years. This includes a subset of 193 patients who are currently on or were on injectable medication for MS in the past.

About Betaseron: Betaseron® (Interferon beta-1b) is indicated for the treatment of relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis to reduce the frequency of clinical exacerbations. Patients with multiple sclerosis in whom efficacy has been demonstrated include patients who have experienced a first clinical episode and have MRI features consistent with multiple sclerosis.

A number of factors have been shown to influence a person’s perceived comfort and satisfaction associated with MS medications, including number of injections, product formulation and patient support. Betaseron therapy requires half as many injections as Copaxone®* (glatiramer acetate). Additionally, in a study, significantly more Betaseron than Rebif®** patients were pain free at all time points measured (immediately after injection and 30 and 60 minutes after injection) over the course of 15 injections. Betaseron also does not require refrigeration‡, making travel and transporting medicine easier. The 24/7 nursing support through the BETAPLUS™ program (formerly known as MS PathwaysSM*) and comprehensive patient assistance for those qualified patients§ unable to afford treatment are other benefits that can help patients stay committed to Betaseron treatment.

The most commonly reported adverse reactions are lymphopenia, injection-site reaction, asthenia, flulike symptom complex, headache and pain. Gradual dose titration and use of analgesics during treatment initiation may help reduce flulike symptoms. Betaseron should be used with caution in patients with depression. Injection-site necrosis has been reported in 4 percent of patients in controlled trials. Patients should be advised of the importance of rotating injection sites. Female patients should be warned about the potential risk to pregnancy. Cases of anaphylaxis have been reported rarely. See “Warnings,” “Precautions” and “Adverse Reactions” sections of full Prescribing Information. More information, including the full Prescribing Information, is available at www.betaseron.com.

† BETAPLUS is the new name for the MS PathwaysSM program.

‡ Betaseron is the only immunomodulatory MS therapy that can be stored at room temperature for longer than 30 days. After reconstitution, do not immediately use, the product should be refrigerated and used within three hours.

§ Some restrictions apply. Patients enrolled in any type of government insurance are not eligible. Void where prohibited by law, taxed or restricted.

* Trademarks are the property of their respective owners:

- Betaseron® is a registered trademark of Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals.
- Copaxone® is a registered trademark of Teva Neuroscience, Inc.
- Rebif® is a registered trademark of EMD Serono, Inc.
- MS PathwaysSM is a service mark of Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals.