

Motor Neurone Disease

Motor Neurone Disease (MND), also known as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's Disease, is a rare neurological condition. Symptoms of MND include muscle weakness and degeneration. Over time, this affliction results in "wasting" where the disease progresses until it eventually causes death. Lou Gehrig's Disease is most likely to get diagnosed in people aged 40 - 60, with people in their 50's being the most prevalent age group getting diagnosed with the affliction. In some cases, people in their 30's can find themselves battling this progressive, terminal illness.

Causes of Motor Neurone Disease

At the time of this writing, there was no known cause of MND. Factors that are believed to contribute to the outbreak of this disease include genetic disposition, as well as exposure to toxins and chemicals in the environment, an infection caused by viral agents, and premature aging.

This progressive disease has four stages.

Stage One is the initial onset of the disease. Common symptoms that patients with Stage One MND experience muscle spasms, muscle cramps, muscle shrinkage, twitching, and muscle weakness. Older patients may also have troubles with maintaining balance, suffer from fatigue, or may start losing their ability to grip things.

In Stage Two, the symptoms of the disease start worsening. Patients with Stage Two MND experience muscle pain and paralysis. Joints start becoming rigid, making normal activities, such as standing up difficult. Other problems like weakness, swelling, and dry mouth, and difficulty eating and swallowing are also frequent in Stage Two MND patients.

In Stage Three, MND patients health condition significantly declines. Mobility is restricted. Complete paralyzation of voluntary muscles, as well as difficulty with involuntary muscles responsible for breathing, are common. Patients might also experience pain, headaches, and dizziness. The help of a full-time caregiver is likely to be required, particularly as sufferers enter the fourth, and final, stage of the illness.

Stage Four MND is the terminal stage of the illness. Involuntary muscles associated with breathing and heart rate could fail. Other possibilities that could result in the death of the Motor Neurone Disease patient include cardiac arrest or choking as a result of muscle failure.

Treating Motor Neurone Disease

When treating Motor Neurone Disease, a variety of therapies are available, dependent on which stage of the disease the person getting treated is experiencing.

1. **Physical Therapy** - Physical therapy is helpful to restore strength and function to affected parts of the body.

2. **Glutamate Blockers and Muscle Relaxers** - These may get prescribed to help manage pain, muscle tension, and discomfort. In early 2017, a new drug called Radicova got approved for the treatment of MND. This is the first MND drug therapy in twenty-two years.
3. **Other Treatments** - Other treatments for MND include Tracheotomy if a breathing tube needs to get inserted and Gastrostomy for feeding and to drain excess fluids.

MND patients receive care from a variety of healthcare professionals including Primary Care Physicians, Respiratory Therapists, Neurologists, Speech Therapists, Pulmonologists, Occupational Therapists, and Palliative Care Providers.

If you or someone you love is experiencing symptoms of MND, make an appointment with your Primary Care Physician or General Practitioner as soon as possible to discuss the issue.