

## PHYSICAL THERAPY INTERVENTION OUTCOMES FOR MS: A RESOURCE FOR NEUROLOGISTS

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**Background:** The *Education and Scholarship Track in Multiple Sclerosis (MS)* is a unique collaboration between the University of North Carolina (UNC), Division of Physical Therapy (PT) and the Eastern North Carolina Chapter of the National MS Society. This collaboration includes a number of opportunities for PT scholars to observe neurologists' clinical assessment and intervention of patients with MS. Data shows that neurologists have a low rate of referral for physical therapy interventions for their patients with MS. An evidence-based handout was created by two PT scholars as an effort to provide information to neurologists regarding the positive outcomes of PT intervention for individuals with MS. It is believed that increased awareness of the benefits of PT will enhance future neurologist referral rates in hopes of preventing falls and improving functional independence in individuals with MS. **Objectives:** The goal is to enhance the knowledge and awareness among local neurologists of physical therapy interventions for fall prevention and symptom management in patients with MS. The desired outcome is to increase neurologist referral of patients with MS to physical therapy. **Methods:** Two evidence-based handouts were created for distribution to local neurologists at the North Carolina Neurological Society annual meeting. One handout focuses on outcomes of PT interventions for management of MS symptoms, including gait deviations and fatigue. The second handout focuses on outcomes of PT interventions addressing fall prevention in this population. Neurologists will be asked to complete a short survey before and after reading the handout. The survey includes questions regarding percentage of caseload related to MS, PT referral rates, and basis for referral or lack of referral. **Results:** A booth has been secured at the North Carolina Neurological Society annual meeting on February 17-18, 2012 for distribution of handouts and evaluation of results. Evaluation tool addresses potential changes in referral rates and basis for referral in response to evidence-based handout. **Conclusion:** It is our goal that this handout will increase referral rates among neurologists and serve as a guide for appropriate referral to physical therapy among the MS population.