

Question route for focus group with people with MS (patients)

Given that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus groups (the researcher does not have control over what the participants may disclose following the focus groups), the moderator will begin by emphasizing that anything participants hear should be kept confidential.

Introductory round

Let's start with an introduction. Tell us your first name and how long you have been living with MS. [Round robin question]

Opening questions

1. Today we are going to be talking about the sorts of difficulties you can experience due to MS, especially related to walking, and some of the treatments that can help improve your walking, such as physical therapy. When I say the words, "physical therapy," what is the first thing that comes to mind? [Answer to be short] [Round robin question]
2. Now I want you tell us about some of the experiences you have had with physical therapy or physical therapists.

Transition questions

3. Walking is an important part of how we get around and do things in our daily life, and it is one of the most commonly affected aspects of function for many people with MS. Tell us about some of the difficulties you experience as a result of your MS that limit your walking or your ability to move around and do the things you want to do?
 - a. What sorts of things do your walking difficulties stop you from doing that you want to be able to do?
 - b. How about doing two things at once? Is it difficult to think and walk at the same time?
4. Think back to the last time you went to physical therapy.
 - a. What was your goal? What did you want to achieve from physical therapy?
 - b. What do you think was the most effective part of your physical therapy?
 - c. What do you think was the least effective part of your physical therapy?
5. Who has tried dalfampridine (Ampyra) for their walking difficulties?
 - a. Why did you decide to try this treatment? Were you also offered physical therapy?
 - b. Are you still taking it? Why did you decide to stop taking it? / Why do you continue to take it?

Key questions

6. How do you know if a treatment has been effective?
7. What is the most important thing to you that has to improve or change for you to feel like you have benefited from a particular treatment or therapy?
8. What is most important to you when choosing a treatment option – how much it helps you, how much it costs, or how easy it is to do (e.g., taking a pill versus participating in PT)?

Closing

9. Our purpose today was to try to understand what is necessary in order for you to feel like you have achieved a meaningful improvement as a result of treatment. Is there anything that we should have talked about but didn't? Is there anything that you wanted to say but didn't get the chance to say?