

Background to these recommendations:

Impacts of MS on the health and social welfare systems

MS, particularly if unmanaged, imposes a heavy cost burden in the long term on health and social services as well as PwMS, partners and their families due to the increasing disability. Because MS is a life-long condition these costs can be very substantial. Global research has shown that:

- **50% of people with MS below retirement age were unable to work due to MS** in Europe¹.
- In New Zealand²:
 - **54.6%** of those between the ages of 25-64 with MS were **not working** despite 90% having a work history
 - **67% changed their work status** due to their MS
 - **30% were on Invalids Benefit** compared to 3% of the general population and;
 - the **median annual personal income was NZ\$20,000**, compared with NZ\$34,750 for the general NZ population.
 - Since the new drugs became available in December 2014 we are hearing of many people returning to work to making work lives easier. This should be further encouraged.
- 52% of people in Europe are diagnosed with Relapsing Remitting MS. In **New Zealand 88% of people with MS are diagnosed initially with RRMS** however some may later convert to more progressive forms³.
- Early diagnosis and drug intervention has meant healthcare costs have shifted from inpatient care and rehabilitation to outpatient care which is now 80-90% of all healthcare costs.
- Most of the costs associated with MS are outside of the health system. MS Ireland reported in 2015 that with 9000 people with MS **the condition cost Ireland €429 million per year. 50% were through indirect costs such as time off work and carers**, 20% through intangible costs such as quality of life and only 30% were through direct costs such as hospitals, doctors and medications⁴.
- In Europe **50% of PwMS reported anxiety/depression** and only 14% reported treatment for depression with 36% having untreated depression/anxiety long term potential cost to health system.
- The average cost in Europe of a relapse to the health system cost 2188Euro (NZ\$3360) based on Purchasing Power. MS Ireland reported in 2015 that the **cost of relapses in Ireland was €16.9million** based on 9000 people with MS.
- Disability progression is associated with increased cost. Mild MS costs Ireland €35,000 per person annually where as **severe MS costs on average €100,000 per person per year**.
- The **MSNZ funded Incidence Study (2012-14)** showed that over a two-year period 464 were recruited on to the study. 187 people experiencing their first symptom of inflammation (CIS) during the period and **277 people who were given a clinical diagnosis of MS**. Of the 277 participants with MS 35% of them were initially recruited with CIS before subsequently be diagnosed with MS during the study period.

¹ Cobelt, G. *et al.* New insights into the burden and costs of multiple sclerosis in Europe. (2017). Multiple Sclerosis Journal

² Alla S and Mason D. Multiple Sclerosis in New Zealand. J Clin Neurosci (2014);21:1288-91

³ The Incidence of Demyelinating Disorders in New Zealand. Final report for MS Incidence Study prepared by Dr Deborah Mason for the Multiple Sclerosis Society of NZ (2017)

⁴ MS Ireland - Societal Cost of Multiple Sclerosis. (2015)