



Multiple Sclerosis Society
Scotland

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Tuesday, 09 January 2007

Dear Sir,

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEALTH CONSULTATION

Please find herewith the MS Society Scotland's response to the current consultation on Public Health Legislation.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Hazelwood".

Mark Hazelwood
Director
m.hazelwood@mssocietyscotland.org.uk



Multiple Sclerosis Society
Scotland

MS SOCIETY RESPONSE TO “PUBLIC HEALTH LEGISLATION IN SCOTLAND: A CONSULTATION”

This response addresses Questions 2.2 and 2.3.

QUESTION 2.2

The Society is supportive of the proposal to develop an additional notification system for non-communicable diseases outlined in 2.2.

We propose that multiple sclerosis should be specified as a statutory reportable condition, for the following reasons:-

1. Multiple sclerosis constitutes a major public health issue for Scotland. There are an estimated 10400 people with MS. A recent study put the cost of each case of MS at £1 million¹.
2. There are currently no systems in place for ascertaining and monitoring the rates of MS in the Scottish population.
3. Recent studies have suggested that the rate of MS may be rising (due to an increase in the rate of MS in women²).
4. Efforts to understand the reasons why Scotland has the highest prevalence of MS of any country are greatly hampered by the absence of systems generating robust epidemiological data.

¹ Ebers et al, Lancet October 2006

² Ebers et al, Lancet October 2006

5. Efforts to plan health and social care services to meet the needs of people affected by multiple sclerosis and their carers are hampered by the absence of robust data on the numbers of people with MS and their needs.

Given the history of stigma associated with previous systems of notifiable conditions the Society believes that great care and attention must be given to the terminology, marketing and introduction of the proposed additional system. People with MS will also wish to be reassured on issues of privacy and confidentiality.

QUESTION 2.3

To the proposed list of key issues to be considered prior to making a new condition reportable we would add an examination of the adequacy of existing data collection systems.

Respondent Information Form

Mark Hazelwood,
Director,
Multiple Sclerosis Society Scotland.

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1. I am responding on behalf of an organisation – the Multiple Sclerosis Society Scotland.
2. N/A
3. Yes
4. Yes



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