

Prescribing sunshine for multiple sclerosis?

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Could a holiday in the sun reduce the risk of developing multiple sclerosis? In a recent review for *F1000 Medicine Reports*, Bridget Bagert and Dennis Bourdette highlight recent advances in potential treatments.

Multiple sclerosis (MS) results from a failure of the body to recognize itself. The [immune system](#) attacks and destroys the sheath that protects [nerve fibres](#), as if it were a foreign body or infection. Vitamin D, which is produced in the skin in response to natural sunlight, is an immune system regulator. This might explain why MS is less common in sunnier countries.

Giving MS sufferers vitamin D pills - or encouraging them to spend more time in the sun - might be a cheap and easy treatment. Bagert and Bourdette point out that oral [vitamin D](#) therapy is now in phase II clinical trials, to see how well it works and how much would be needed.

They say: "The arrival of effective oral agents will give MS patients more therapeutic options and will be a major advance in the global effort to alter the natural history of this chronic disease".

More information: www.f1000medicine.com/reports/10.3410/m1-34/

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