

Diet guidelines critical for multiple sclerosis patients, research finds

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People recently diagnosed with multiple sclerosis crave and need more advice about recommended foods and diets that will help manage the disease's symptoms, new research led by Curtin University has found.

The research, published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, found that [health](#) professionals downplaying or not addressing the importance of following national dietary guidelines for [multiple sclerosis](#) (MS) was in fact having the opposite effect for recently diagnosed individuals, causing them to seek alternative and potentially harmful dietary options.

Lead author Honours student Mrs Rebecca Russell, from the School of Public Health at Curtin University, said the study offered a unique opportunity to review the experiences and responses to diet in people recently diagnosed with MS.

"Multiple sclerosis is an immune-mediated disease that has no current cure and is one of the most common causes of neurological disability in young adults worldwide, affecting at least 2.3 million people globally," Mrs Russell said.

"Our research aimed to explore the role of diet, and whether there had been any changes to diet routines for 11 individuals who had recently been diagnosed with MS in Western Australia.

"We found that there was a lack of generalised dietary advice for people

just diagnosed. In light of this, people with MS conducted their own extensive research or self-experimented with diet to either control their MS symptoms or to cure MS."

Co-author Dr. Andrea Begley, also from Curtin's School of Public Health, said the findings highlight the need to improve access to [diet](#) education for people with MS to help counteract the amount of misinformation on the internet.

"Further research is needed to explore dietary perceptions, but our research allowed us to get a better understanding about how recently diagnosed people with MS experience and respond to dietary advice provided by healthcare professionals," Dr. Begley said.

"Our findings may be of interest to healthcare professionals who can fill this apparent void and address concerns with alternative therapeutic diets advertised to treat or cure MS."

The paper was also co-authored by Dr. Lucinda Black and Associate Professor Jill Sherriff from the School of Public Health at Curtin University.

More information: Rebecca D. Russell et al. Dietary responses to a multiple sclerosis diagnosis: a qualitative study, *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (2018). [DOI: 10.1038/s41430-018-0252-5](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41430-018-0252-5)

Provided by Curtin University

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