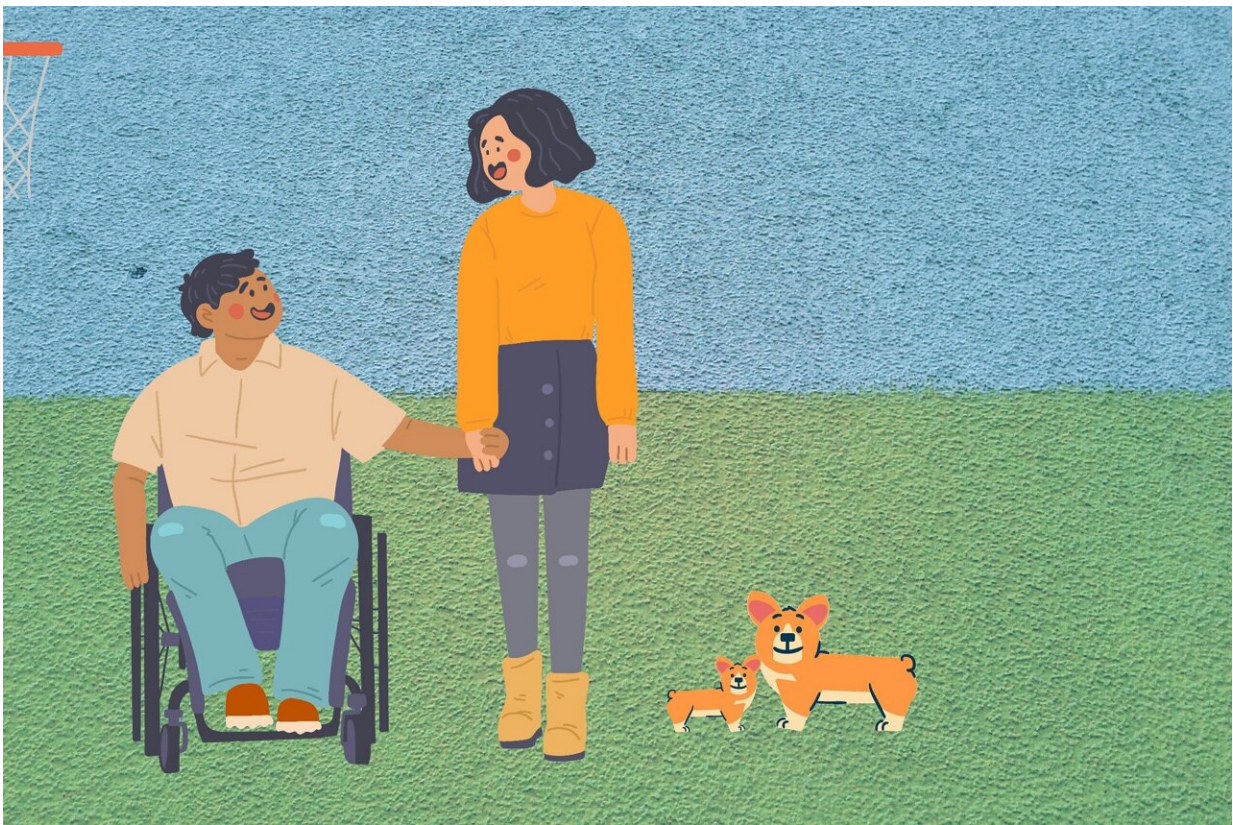


Social integration and social support predict health and well-being of individuals with multiple sclerosis

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Researchers conducted a comprehensive online survey of people with multiple sclerosis, assessing their health, lifestyle, personality, MS

symptomatology, psychological well-being, social support, and social integration. Study findings suggest that social integration and social support warrant inclusion in MS management.

The research was published online in *Health and Social Care in the Community* on March 24, 2022. The authors are Elena M. Latinsky-Ortiz of Loyola University-Maryland, and Lauren Strober, Ph.D., of Kessler Foundation.

There is a growing awareness of social factors as risk factors for [poor health](#) and mortality. In fact, the risks for poor outcomes may be greater than for more established lifestyle risk factors such as smoking, [poor diet](#), lack of exercise. While the impact of social isolation is recognized in the older population and among those with cancer, few studies have addressed the impact in people with MS, who are more likely to report poorer health and well-being than their peers without MS. For this study, researchers surveyed 183 individuals with MS to determine the role of social and lifestyle factors on their health and psychological well-being.

"Our study confirmed the association between [social integration](#) and [social support](#) and the health and well-being of people with MS," said Dr. Strober, senior research scientist in the Center for Neuropsychology and Neuroscience Research at Kessler Foundation.

"These [social factors](#) significantly predicted health and well-being, even when accounting for demographic factors, personality, lifestyle factors, and cardiovascular risk," she emphasized.

"The good news is that this finding points to another way to improve the lives of people living with MS. Their clinical management should include assessment of social activities and support as well as strategies that optimize social integration and reduce isolation. To achieve this, researchers need to focus on developing effective interventions aimed at

increasing social integration and connectedness."

More information: Elena M. Latinsky-Ortiz et al, Keeping it together: The role of social integration on health and psychological well-being among individuals with multiple sclerosis, *Health & Social Care in the Community* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/hsc.13800](https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13800)

Provided by Kessler Foundation

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