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## **MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Multiple sclerosis (MS), although not a common disorder seen in general practice, is nevertheless a challenging condition to effectively manage. It often affects people in the prime of their lives and the personal, family, social and occupational impact is only too apparent.

MS is an unpredictable, chronic and disabling condition of the central nervous system. It is a dynamic illness so patients' needs will change through the course of their illness. GPs and nurses have a pivotal role to ensure patients can access the services they need in a timely way. Diagnosing MS can be difficult and primary care has an important role in doing so, and also in reassuring people that they do not have this disease.

A multi-disciplinary approach to management is required, including these three areas:

- helping reduce symptoms,
- diagnosing/treating acute relapses, and differentiating these from other illnesses such as infection,
- reducing relapses and disability<sup>1</sup>.

This module aims to cover these three areas, and to provide sources of information, for patients and professionals, on new treatments and support services.

### **CASES**

#### **Case 1.**

#### **Julie, age 25**

Julie comes to see you with a one day history of pain and loss of vision in her left eye. It came on suddenly and there was no history of trauma. She is otherwise fit and well with no significant past medical history. She is on no medication and does not smoke.