

A Publication of Multiple Sclerosis Resources of Central New York, Inc.®

A Message from the Executive Director:

They say, “No News Is Good News,” however, in our case, “No News Is Not Good News.” We are still waiting for state and local regulations to be determined for our area, with regards to holding functions with over 250 people. Until then, the MS Walks, the MS Dinner of Hope and many other in-person fund raising events are still on hold. I know this is frustrating, as we have had many calls about our events, but it is even more frustrating for us, as we would like to start to plan which events we can work on. As you know, we are approaching the middle of 2021, we will not be able to conduct all of our usual events, as time will not allow it. So we will have to determine which ones will be feasible. We would like to get back to normal, or as normal can be, but unfortunately, at the present time our hands are still tied. We are doing our best to keep everything else going as much as possible, and we are succeeding!! I am hopeful, by our June newsletter we will have some good news to share. Until then, please as individuals take the right steps to help us move ahead and get our State and our Country back to being a safe place!!!

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a most sincere thank you to Sue and Brian Dahl. They have been Captains of “Team Best Ever,” who have participated in the Mission Steps® Walk for several years. This year, because we

could not hold the Mission Steps® Walk on the first Sunday in March, as usual, they decided to keep the tradition going by hosting a drive by for donations for the Walk at their home. They encouraged family, friends and neighbors who annually walk and contribute to “Team Best Ever,” to stop by, make a donation and in keeping with their ritual, they handed out beverages and snacks to everyone. Masks and safe distancing were observed. They raised more than \$ 2,000 dollars for MS Resources. Thank you Sue, Brian and all who contributed!!!

Also, a shout out to Jennifer Klawonn, a Mission Steps® walker, who also solicited for donations for the Walk. Jennifer sent in over \$1,000 to us. Thank you Jennifer!!

The last shout out is to the many individuals that have solicited for birthday donations to our agency through Facebook. Thank you so much for your support...it was thoughtful and is truly appreciated!!

Jessa

Look Inside for:

- ◆ **Support Groups**
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- ◆ **Raffle...buy a ticket(s)**

IN PERSON SUPPORTS GROUPS ARE STILL ON HOLD.....

The **Liverpool Support Group** is holding Zoom meetings. If you are interested in participating in that group, you must contact Carolyn Vickery (number below) and provide her with your email address. She will then add you to her list and email you the information prior to the meeting.

MS Resources Support Group Meeting

Annette will be conducting two Zoom Support Group Meetings from the office in April. (See dates below) If you are interested in taking part in one or both, please email MS Resources office so the link can be sent to you.

Wednesday, April 21 – 10:30 am

Tuesday, April 27 – 2:30 pm

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the contact leaders or the MS Office.

MS Resources Support Groups

For sharing experiences about MS with family and friends join a meeting.

Syracuse Area

2nd Tuesday of the month

Lincoln Middle School

1613 James St. Syracuse NY 13203

6:30 - 8:00 PM School Cafeteria

Contact:

Angela McBride - (315) 876-2614

Madison County Area

1st Monday of the month

First Presbyterian Church of Chittenango

118 Arch St. Chittenango, NY 13037

2:00 - 4:00 PM

Contact:

Donna Denison - (315) 655-3517

Auburn/Cayuga County Area

4th Tuesday of the month

Finger Lakes Mall – Community Room

Rts. 5 & 20 Auburn, NY 13021

Enter Mall Entrance by Penney's

7:00 PM

Contacts:

Susan Rusinko (315) 255-0982 or

Bernie Caruana at (315) 252-1183

Liverpool Group – ZOOM

3rd Tuesday of the month

United Church of Christ (UCC) Bayberry

215 Blackberry Rd. Liverpool, NY 13090

6 - 8 PM

Fellowship Hall, follow the signs to the meeting room.

Contact:

Carolyn Vickery –(315) 409-9692

Broome County Group

4th Thursday of the month

Dunkin' – Community Room

216 Reynolds Rd. Johnson City, NY 13790

6:30 - 8:00 PM

Contacts:

Steve Yeager – (607) 785-7703 or

Rick Fiori – (607) 321-1489

MS Breakfast Buddies

Meets in the Binghamton area

Times and locations vary

Contact:

Sue Maston – (570) 623-2302

Fairmount/Camillus Area

1st Tuesday of the month

Fairmount Community Library

Community Room

406 Chapel Dr. Fairmount NY 13219

1:30 - 3:00PM

Contact:

Kim DeStefano – (315) 569-2636

Virtual Service Programs

Pharmaceutical companies are still conducting service programs virtually. As we receive information on them, we will forward you the information on them via email. To participate in the programs you must make reservations by calling or emailing the drug companies directly. The instructions are in the flyers we send you. They are also listed on our website:

<http://msrofcny.org/pharmaceutical-programs/>

Please take advantage of these informative programs.

Drug Therapies

A complete list of drug therapies are listed on our website:

<http://msrofcny.org/education/understanding-medications-to-help-treat-your-ms/>

By clicking the links, you will be brought directly to the pharmaceutical companies website for information. Check them out if you're interested!

MS and Pregnancy

Women with multiple sclerosis (MS) may not be at a higher risk of pregnancy complications like gestational diabetes, emergency cesarean section or stillbirth than women who do not have the disease, according to a study in the February 3, 2021, online issue of *Neurology® Clinical Practice*, an official journal of the American Academy of Neurology. However, the study did find that babies born to mothers with MS had a higher chance of

being delivered by elective cesarean section (c-section) or induced delivery, and being small for their age compared to babies of women who did not have the disease.

"Women with multiple sclerosis may be understandably concerned about the risks of pregnancy," said study author Melinda Magyari, M.D., Ph.D., of the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. "While previous research has shown there is no higher risk of birth defects for babies born to women with MS, there are still a lot of unknowns around pregnancy and MS. We wanted to find out if women with MS are at risk for a variety of pregnancy complications. We found overall their pregnancies were just as healthy as those of the moms without MS."

The study involved 2,930 pregnant women with MS who were compared to 56,958 pregnant women without MS. All women gave birth between 1997 and 2016.

Researchers found no difference in risk of several pregnancy complications between women with MS and women without it. No differences were found in risk of pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes, placenta complications, emergency c-section, instrumental delivery, stillbirth, preterm birth, congenital malformations or low Apgar score. Apgar score is a test of a newborn's health, including measures like heart rate, reflexes and muscle tone immediately after birth.

Researchers did find that 401 of the 2,930 women with MS, or 14%, had an elective c-section, compared to 4,402 of the 56,958 women without MS, or 8%, who had an elective c-section. After adjusting for other factors that could increase the likelihood of having an elective c-section,

such as prior c-section and mother's age, women with MS were 89% more likely to have an elective c-section.

Researchers also found women with MS were 15% more likely to have an induced delivery than women without the disease.

Also, women with MS were found to be 29% more likely to have babies that were born small for their gestational age compared to women without MS. Overall, 3.4% of women with MS had babies small for their gestational age, compared to 2.8% of women without MS.

"We think the reason more women with MS have babies by elective c-section or induced delivery may have to do with MS-related symptoms such as muscle weakness, spasticity or fatigue that might affect the birth," Magyari said. "Any of these could make a mom more tired and lead to delivery complications that could prompt the clinician and woman to take extra precautions."

Researchers also found that mothers with MS were 13% less likely to give birth to babies with signs of being deprived of oxygen, or asphyxia. Magyari said the higher prevalence of elective c-sections among women with MS most likely explains the corresponding lower odds of asphyxia.

A limitation of the study is the lack of data on the mothers' smoking, which could cause babies to be born small for their gestational age.

Story Source:

Materials provided by **American Academy of Neurology**. *Note: Content may be edited for style and length.*

Journal Reference:

1. Johanna Balslev Andersen, Tine Iskov Kopp, Finn Sellebjerg,

Melinda Magyari. **Pregnancy-related and Perinatal Outcomes in Women with MS A Nationwide Danish Cross-sectional Study.** *Neurology® Clinical Practice*, 2021

American Academy of Neurology. "Moms with MS at no more risk of pregnancy complications than moms without MS: Moms with MS more likely to have baby by C-section, induced delivery."

ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 3 February 2021.

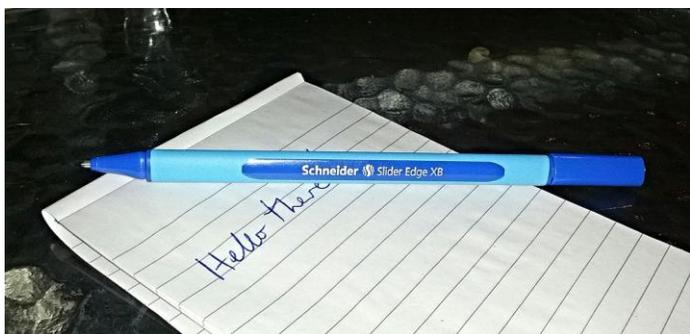
www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/02/210203162305.htm.

Annette's Corner

"The ART of the Written Letter"

We live in an age where technological advances are all the rage. We have Smart phones, Smart TV's and even Smart homes. If you are like me, I am often reluctant to let technology rule my world. I know, I know, this is a sign of the times and if we want to keep up, we need to KEEP UP. You are reading an article from a person who uses a Flip Phone so please have a little compassion for me. I was sitting at a restaurant not too long ago with a couple of my young cousins and they just happened to be texting each other. I could not believe what I was witnessing, couldn't they just speak to each other? So communication has really changed, hasn't it and the written letter is now a dinosaur among us. While cleaning out some very old "clutter" from my attic, I came across hand written speeches that my Grandmother wrote to address several Veteran's Organizations back in the 1940's and 1950's. They were well preserved in plastic covers and were pages long. She was the President of an

Italian American organization and their focus was veteran's affairs. She did not have a type-writer so she took pen to paper and began to write her speeches. I read through several of them and they were inspirational and quite moving. These are treasures that shall remain in their plastic covers tucked away in a neat corner of my home. Fast forward to 2021, I was contacted by my Alumni Affairs Office at Niagara University to see if I would be interested in **writing** to a few prospective students. Write, or send an email??? Write, or facebook message??? Write...really! I gladly accepted and 4 days later I received my students names, stamps, envelopes and Niagara University Alumni Cards to use for my personal notes. I sat at my kitchen table and began to recount my experiences as an undergraduate and I conveyed them in ink to these students. I really enjoyed expressing myself in writing these and I even asked for 25 more prospects to write to. It means a lot I believe, to get a hand-written note from someone.



It means they took time to think of you and write their thoughts down and convey them to you. I love the art of writing and my dream to knock out a novel would be a dream come true. For right now, I will use my words and my paper and pens to share my college years with a future alumnus. Maybe I can convince them to choose Niagara with my hand-written note.

Multiple Sclerosis and Depression—

Relationships between multiple sclerosis (MS) and depression did not appear to be causal, a Mendelian randomization study suggested.

Genetic liability to major depressive disorder had no effect on the odds of MS, reported Adil Harroud, MD, of the University of California San Francisco, and colleagues, at ACTRIMS Forum 2021, the annual meeting of the Americas Committee for Treatment and Research in MS.

Susceptibility to MS also had no effect on the odds of major depressive disorder, but a genetic predisposition toward higher BMI increased the likelihood of each disease, they added. The findings were published in *Multiple Sclerosis Journal*.

"Depression is common in people with MS and is associated with accelerated disability progression. Individuals with comorbid MS and depression have synergistically higher mortality rates compared to those with depression or MS alone," Harroud said.

"We aimed to determine whether this association reflects a causal relationship between depression and MS," he told *MedPage Today*. "We undertook a Mendelian randomization approach, which uses natural genetic variation to proxy an exposure and minimize the effects of confounders."

This is because genetic variants are randomly allocated at conception and generally more selective in their associations, Harroud noted. "Mendelian randomization is also robust to reverse causality, which is significant because the incidence

of depression rises as early as 5 to 10 years before MS diagnosis," he said.

"The intuition behind Mendelian randomization is that if depression is causal in MS, then genetic variants which reliably increase the risk of depression in the population should also increase the risk of MS."

The study used genetic summary results for major depressive disorder from a [genome-wide meta-analysis](#) of three cohorts: the [Psychiatric Genomics Consortium](#), UK Biobank, and 23andMe. Depression was self-reported in the UK Biobank and 23andMe cohorts; it was based on clinically diagnosed major depressive disorder in the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium group. The researchers found a strong genetic correlation (0.85–0.87) between data sets, despite different case definitions for depression.

In reverse, with major depressive disorder as the outcome, estimates were restricted to Psychiatric Genomics Consortium and UK Biobank data due to 23andMe restrictions.

The researchers found no effect of genetic liability to major depressive disorder on the odds of MS (OR 1.07 per doubling in odds of major depressive disorder, 95% CI 0.90–1.28, $P=0.43$), and no support for a causal effect in the other direction (OR 1.00 per doubling in odds of MS, 95% CI 0.99–1.01, $P=0.51$). Sensitivity analyses indicated that bias from pleiotropy was unlikely.

A genetic predisposition toward higher BMI increased the odds of MS (OR 1.34 per SD increase in BMI, 95% CI 1.09–1.65 $P=0.005$) and of major depressive disorder (OR 1.08, 95% CI 1.01–

1.15, $P=0.02$). "Genetic evidence suggesting commonality of obesity to both conditions may partly explain the increased incidence of depression pre-MS diagnosis," the researchers wrote. It's important to note that this study focused on MS susceptibility and not MS disease course, Harroud pointed out. "It does not address whether MS-related inflammation modifies the risk of depression and vice versa," he said. Identifying and treating depression in MS remains an important clinical objective, as people with MS and comorbid depression have worse outcomes than MS patients without depression, he added.

Primary Source

Americas Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis

Source Reference: [Harroud A, et al "Mendelian randomization provides no evidence for a causal role in the bidirectional relationship between depression and multiple sclerosis," ACTRIMS Forum 2021; Abstract P090.](#)

Secondary Source

Multiple Sclerosis Journal
Source Reference: [Harroud A, et al "Mendelian randomization provides no evidence for a causal role in the bidirectional relationship between depression and multiple sclerosis" *Mult Scler* 2021; DOI: 10.1177/1352458521993075.](#)



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<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/16-1558498>



Are You a Hockey Fan???

Do you remember David Ling, a Canadian Professional hockey player who played for the Syracuse Crunch from 2001 to 2004? He was one of the most popular players to play in Syracuse!

Well here's your chance to catch up with "Linger" and see what he's been up to.

Enjoy a 15 minute zoom call with David Ling. Find out what he has been up to since his days here in Syracuse.

Take a chance, take a few chances and buy some raffle tickets to win a zoom call with him, all proceeds from the sale of the raffle tickets will benefit Multiple Sclerosis Resources.

**Tickets Available until 1 pm on 4/30
\$ 5 each, 3 for \$ 10 or 10 for \$ 25**

Purchase by clicking the following link:

<http://msrofcny.org/zoom-with-david-ling/>

Drawing on April 30, 2021 at 2 pm.
The winner will be notified by email.

Newsletter is written and edited by:

Annette Simiele

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Call us if you need us.....

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