

# Functioning in individuals with Multiple Sclerosis: Results of an international expert survey

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## BACKGROUND

Multiple sclerosis (MS) can follow a variety of clinical courses and is unpredictable in terms of prognosis. Impairment, activity limitations and participation restrictions are important consequences of MS. Therefore, a widely agreed-upon tool for capturing these complex constructs would be important for the description and assessment of functioning problems of individuals with MS as well as for the planning of interventions. With the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) we can now rely on a globally agreed-upon framework and system for classifying and describing the typical spectrum of problems in functioning of individuals with MS from a multidisciplinary point of view.

## OBJECTIVE

Objective was to identify areas of functioning and environmental factors relevant for individuals with MS from the perspective of health professionals (HPs) using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).

## METHODS

- Worldwide internet-based expert survey with HPs (at least 5 years of experience in the treatment of MS patients)
- Questionnaire with open-ended questions according to the ICF components (asking for problems in functioning and environmental factors relevant for individuals with MS)
- Linking of the statements of the HPs into the ICF language according to standardized linking rules
- Analysis of frequencies of ICF categories named by the HPs

## RESULTS

- Participants: 173 HPs from 46 countries
  - 25 nurses
  - 20 occupational therapists
  - 49 physicians
  - 28 physiotherapists
  - 25 (neuro-)psychologists
  - 11 social workers
  - 15 speech & language therapists
- Linked ICF categories: 7756 statements were linked to 423 ICF categories

## TOP 5 PER ICF COMPONENT

TOP 5	Body Functions	% (n)
b1300	Energy level	70% (121)
b210	Seeing functions	60% (103)
b4552	Fatiguability	55% (95)
b640	Sexual functions	54% (94)
b280	Sensation of pain	47% (82)
TOP 5	Body Structures	% (n)
s110	Structures of brain	56% (97)
s750	Structures of lower extremities	45% (78)
s120	Spinal cord & related structures	40% (69)
s6102	Urinary bladder	32% (55)
s220	Structures of eyeball	31% (54)
TOP 5	Activities & Participation	% (n)
d850	Remunerative employment	54% (93)
d450	Walking	45% (78)
d855	Non - remunerative employment	42% (73)
d540	Dressing	29% (50)
d920	Recreation and leisure	22% (38)
TOP 5	Environmental Factors	% (n)
e310	Immediate family	75% (129)
e315	Extended family	72% (125)
e580	Health services, systems & policies	63% (109)
e165	Assets	45% (78)
e555	Associations and organizational services	35% (61)

Tab. 1: Most frequently linked ICF categories regarding each ICF component

## CONCLUSION

Various relevant ICF categories of all ICF components were identified. The perspective of HPs on relevant aspects of functioning and environmental factors for individuals with MS were identified and linked into ICF language. The identified ICF categories emphasise the variability of the disease and the broad spectrum of impairment, activity limitations and participation restrictions in individuals with MS.

## CONTACT

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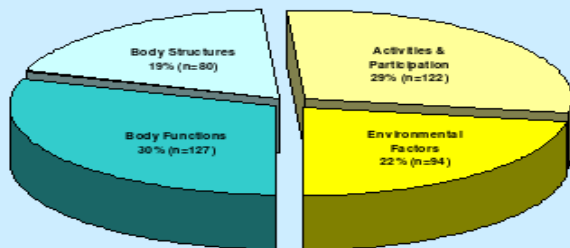


Fig. 1: Linked ICF categories regarding each ICF component