People with multiple sclerosis (MS) are demonstrating a decreased trust in pharmacologic approaches and increased interest in what they can do to feel their best, particularly in the areas of diet, exercise and emotional wellness. Preliminary data, including correlations between frequencies of symptom- and wellness-related keyword usage, suggest that people with MS are looking to wellness-focused approaches to managing symptoms of MS.

Healthcare professionals face significant challenges in providing guidance around wellness strategies, including limited time with their patients, lack of robust data to guide recommendations, a don’t ask/don’t tell conundrum in the area of mood disorders, and inadequate mental health resources in many areas of the country.

In response, a National MS Society meeting of clinicians, researchers, people with MS and Society staff reviewed current knowledge in each domain, identified key research questions and made programmatic recommendations to ensure that people with MS have the information and support they need to achieve wellness.

Based on the outcomes of this meeting, the Society will:

- Design and disseminate a toolkit to facilitate clinician–patient conversations around wellness strategies; create an MS Wellness Research Network with the goal of developing study design criteria and specific research methodologies for wellness research; develop a long-term strategy for funding wellness research; offer programming and resources for people with MS and healthcare professionals to inform, encourage, and facilitate people’s pursuit of personal wellness.

In the meantime, strategies were identified in each domain to promote physical and emotional well-being:

**In the area of diet, healthcare providers are encouraged to:**

- Provide clear dietary recommendations based on current evidence:
  - Limit sugar and processed foods
  - Increase fruits and vegetables
  - Choose lean sources of protein
  - Choose healthy fats
  - Consume adequate fiber and fluids
- Provide unbiased information about “MS diets”
- Focus on reducing obesity that appears to increase risk for MS as well as for co-morbidities that impact health and increase morbidity and mortality among people with MS

**In the area of exercise, healthcare providers are encouraged to:**

- Promote physical activity and exercise as key components of comprehensive MS management—to improve overall health, MS symptoms, and quality of life

**In the area of emotional wellness, healthcare providers are encouraged to:**

- Talk with their patients from the time of diagnosis onward about the importance of identifying and addressing mood changes
- Screen regularly for depression using one of the brief assessment tools that have been validated in MS

Disclosure: For a full list of disclosures for all authors of this article, please see the full text online.

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