(S107) EVALUATION OF AN OPTIMIZED NURSING-CARE PROGRAM FOR PATIENTS WITH RELAPSING-REMITTING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS IN GERMANY

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Background: Patient support during initiation of treatment for multiple sclerosis (MS) is critical to ensure continued treatment adherence and optimal benefit to the patient. Objectives: To assess patient and physician satisfaction with an introductory care program delivered by MS specialist nurses in Germany during the initial period of treatment for MS with subcutaneous (SC) interferon beta-1a (IFNβ-1a). Methods: Eligible patients had clinically confirmed relapsing-remitting (RR) MS and were beginning treatment with SC IFNβ-1a. At baseline, data recorded included demographics, disease characteristics, and treatment history. Patients were enrolled in the introductory care program and self-administered SC IFNβ-1a, 44 or 22 g three times weekly. The planned observation period was 15 weeks following therapy initiation, and at the final visit, physician reports of missed doses and changes to patients’ neurologic status were recorded. A physician survey assessed physicians’ perception of the impact of the advice and support of the nurse and overall patient satisfaction. Results: A total of 1426 patients were eligible for assessment; the mean (SD) age was 37.4 (10.5) years; 72.7% were female. The mean disease duration was 3.7 (5.6) years, and the mean Expanded Disability Status Scale (EDSS) score was 2.4 (1.5), based on available data from 868 (60.8%) patients. Treatment was regularly injected by 1342 (94.1%) patients, and 1346 (94.4%) continued treatment until the end of the study. At the end of the study, the physician recorded an improvement in the neurologic status of 681 of 1368 (49.8%) patients; deterioration was recorded for 72 of 1368 (5.3%). Continuation of the nurse program was deemed beneficial in terms of compliance for 1040 of 1371 (75.9%) patients. Positive feedback on the nurse program was given by 1298 of 1392 (93.2%) patients. Only 1 patient gave negative feedback, and 93 gave a neutral response. A total of 1283 of 1383 (92.8%) patients were classified as being “motivated to continue treatment.” Conclusions: The results of this large observational, noninterventional study suggest that an optimized introductory care program delivered by MS nurses is beneficial to patients beginning SC IFNβ-1a therapy for RRMS, and may enhance motivation to continue treatment.

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