(W17) SELF-EFFICACY IMPROVEMENT IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (SIMS): INTERIM RESULTS
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Background: Optimal treatment adherence is required to maximize the effectiveness of multiple sclerosis (MS) immunotherapy treatment. Nursing outreach and support programs have been shown to be effective in improving adherence. However, these programs are not very successful in addressing psychological factors that are implicated in reduced self-efficacy and treatment adherence, such as depression, anxiety, and chronic stress. A guided imagery method has been developed specifically for MS patients who are taking immunotherapy medications. This study aims to investigate the effect of this program when added to a nursing outreach support program. The primary end point is self-efficacy. Secondary end points include treatment adherence, depression, anxiety, and cognitive functioning. It is hypothesized that the experimental group will demonstrate significantly higher illness control self-efficacy.

Objectives: This is a pilot study to determine whether an outreach program consisting of industry-based nursing services augmented with MS-specific guided imagery stress reduction and relaxation training will result in superior self-efficacy and immunotherapy treatment adherence compared with nursing outreach services alone.

Methods: This is a 1-year, randomized, prospective pilot study. Patients with a diagnosis of clinically isolated syndrome (CIS) or relapsing MS who are initiating interferon beta-1b treatment and meet inclusion and exclusion criteria will be offered participation and provide informed consent. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of two groups: 1) nursing outreach services + relaxation training; or 2) nursing outreach services alone.

Results: This study opened enrollment in 2009 and completed enrollment in February 2010. Interim results for primary and selected secondary end points for a sample of 24 participants will be available in May 2010 for the month 3 and month 6 time points.

Conclusions: Results from this study may inform future research on relaxation training, self-efficacy, and treatment adherence in patients with CIS and relapsing MS. Study results may also guide the development or modification of nursing outreach service approaches for patients starting MS immunotherapy treatments.

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