PL01.01 - The MS Prodrome

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Abstract

Historically, a prodromal period in multiple sclerosis (MS) was not thought to exist. A prodrome can be defined as an early set of signs or symptoms occurring before classical onset of a disease. For a chronic neurological disease such as MS, a prodromal phase could span months or years before ‘MS symptom onset.’ While prodromal phases have been relatively well recognized in other neurological conditions, such as Parkinson disease, the MS prodrome has received little consideration until recently. A better understanding of the MS prodrome could have profound implications for disease prevention and management. Thus, it is important for scientists across all disciplines, from bench researchers to epidemiologists, medical ethicistic, and clinical trialists, as well as clinicians, to be cognizant of this emerging area. However, although the field remains nascent, there is sufficient knowledge of the MS prodrome to affect current practice now, particularly research into risk factors for MS onset. Putative risk factors must be carefully evaluated in light of the MS prodrome. However, much more work is needed before the MS prodrome has direct application to routine clinical practice.

Session Objectives: To summarize and reflect on what is currently known, and not known, about the MS prodrome, and what the implications are for research and future clinical care of person’s with MS.