Developing standards for MS care

Methods

A modified Delphi process was conducted, including both a core Delphi Consensus Panel and an additional Reviewing Group (Figure 1).

Participants

Four Chairs directed the process; they represented neurology, patient-reported outcomes, nursing/policy and the patient perspective.

Participants were invited from regions where MS prevalence is high: 4 North America, Northern Europe, Western Europe, Southern Europe, Eastern Europe and Russia, and Africa, Middle East and South Asia. In total, 41 MS neurologists from 22 countries were invited to participate in the Delphi Consensus Panel (Figure 1); 29 agreed to participate. Thirty-nine nurses, people with MS and allied healthcare professionals were invited to participate in the Reviewing Group to advise the Chairs; 31 agreed to participate (Figure 1).

Results

Defining a good standard of care

For all 21 principles, over 75% of the 27 Panel members agreed in round 1 that the principle was an appropriate and accurate description of a good standard. Three statements gained 100% (27/27) agreement.

Early discussion with patient about the aims of treatment

Evaluation of suitability for eligibility for treatment shortly after MS diagnosis

Regular review of the aims of treatment

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Table 1. Definitions used for consensus standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 4 – consensus statements</th>
<th>( n = 25 )</th>
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<tr>
<td>Round 4, the Panel voted on the consensus statements, indicating agreement (or otherwise) on a five-point scale.</td>
<td>( n = 25 )</td>
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Using standards to improve care

Our vision

The quality standards from the Delphi process will be used as the basis of practical tools to support the implementation of recommendations from brain health time matters in multiple sclerosis.

Quality improvement tool for clinics

An MS Brain Health quality improvement tool is proposed that will help-MS clinics strive for the best possible standard of patient care (Figure 3).

Conclusions

An international group of MS neurologists, MS nurses, allied healthcare professionals and people with MS have been involved in a modified Delphi process to develop quality standards for MS care.

These quality standards describe the timings of key steps in the MS care pathway and will provide a new benchmark for MS clinics globally.