

Factors Driving Patient Selection of Primary Medication for Multiple Sclerosis



Jeffery D¹, Kirzinger S², Halper J³, Preblich R⁴, Bi YJ⁴, Suarez-Zambrano GA⁵, Jo H⁶, Bharmal M⁶

¹Wake Forest University School of Medicine; ²University of Louisville School of Medicine; ³CMSC / IOMSN; ⁴Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals, Inc; ⁵Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals, Inc. ⁶Quintiles Medical Affairs, Epidemiology & Outcomes Research



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Background

- The most important goal in treatment selection for Multiple Sclerosis (MS) has been to find a treatment that can be used comfortably and consistently.
- In previous studies, factors that have been considered by patients in selecting the primary medication for MS have included potential side effects, benefits, frequency, method of medication delivery, personal concerns, priorities and lifestyle.
- This study aims to evaluate the factors driving the selection of the primary medication for MS by patients, using patient-reported outcomes (PRO) data from an observational study.

Methods

- Baseline data from ROBUST, which is a 12-month, US prospective, observational, open-label, single-arm, multi-center outcomes study of Interferon β-1b given every other day for relapsing forms of MS were analyzed.
- At baseline, patients were asked to rate the importance of factors that are typically considered before making a decision to select the primary medication to treat MS (on a scale of 1=not at all important through 5=very important).
- Twelve factors considered in the selection of primary MS medications were evaluated, and have been listed in Table 1.
- Mean scores on each factor were compared across patient sociodemographic characteristics, primary medication types and disease severity.

Results

- At baseline, a total of 99 patients reported that they were taking medications to treat their MS, and thus provided responses on the items of interest.
- Table 2 shows the baseline patient characteristics for the ROBUST sample.
- In this sample, 80.8% were females, 61.6% were married, 70.4% were below 50 years old and 82.8% were White.
- Figure 1 shows the mean scores for the factors patients consider in selecting primary medications.
- Among all patients, the highest importance scores were received for Medication Efficacy (Mean [95% Confidence Interval] = (4.72 [4.57-4.86])), followed by their Doctor's Recommendation (4.57 [4.41-4.72]), Medication Administration (3.88 [3.63-4.13]), Personal Research (3.81 [3.56-4.05]) and Medication Storage (3.71 [3.44-3.98]).
- These factors and their order of importance remained consistent across patient sociodemographic characteristics, primary medication types and disease severity.
- The mean importance scores for Medication Efficacy did not vary by Gender: Female (4.74[4.58-4.89]), and Male (4.63[4.23-5.03]); Race: White(4.71[4.54-4.87]), Black (4.50[3.58-5.42]), Hispanic(4.67[3.81-5.52]), and Asian (5.00); or Baseline EDSS scores: <2 (4.71[4.44-4.98]), 2 to 4 (4.68[4.46-4.90]), 4.5 to 5.5 (5.00), and 6(4.80[4.50-5.10]).

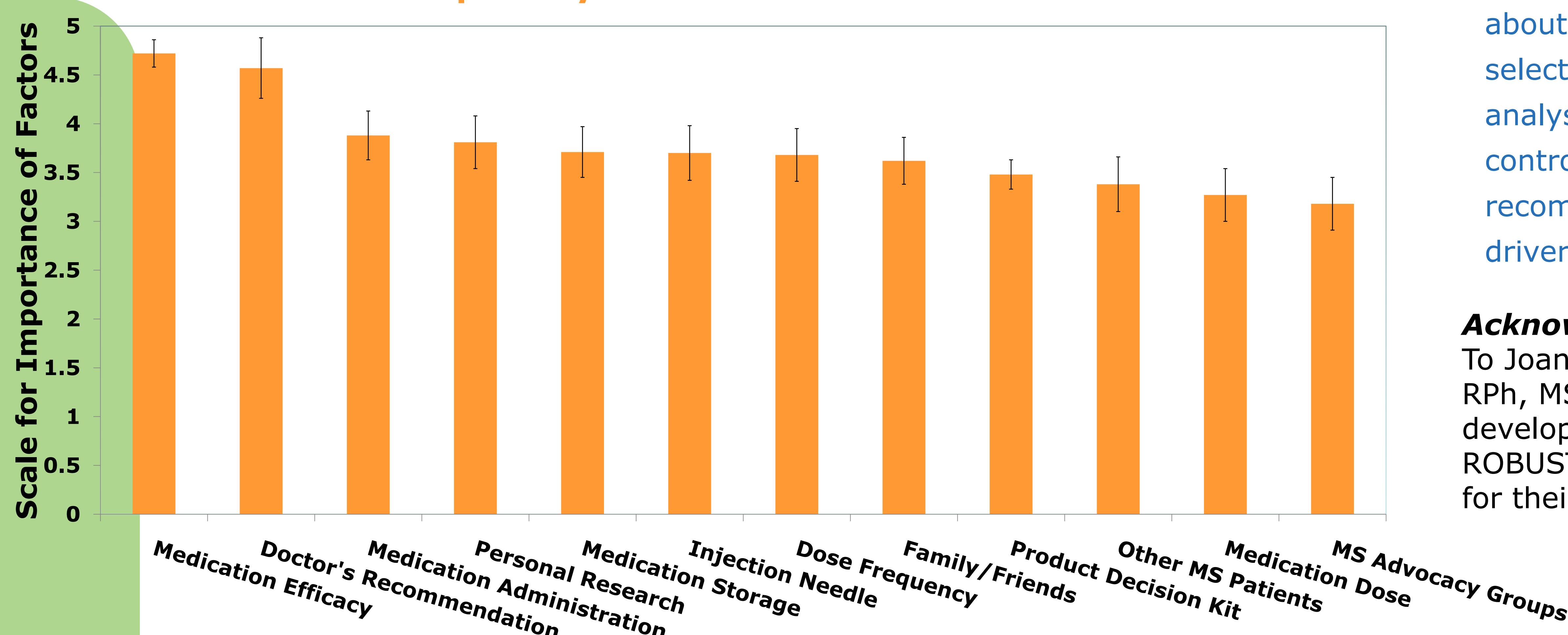
Table 1. Factors considered in the Selection of Primary MS Medication

Factors considered in the selection of primary MS medication	Abbreviated factor name
How well the medication works to control the progression of MS	Medication Efficacy
How much medication is given at each dose	Medication Dose
The convenience of taking the medication	Medication Administration
The convenience of storing the medication	Medication Storage
The number of times I have to take the drug in a week	Dose Frequency
The information in the product's decision kit	Product Decision Kit
The injection needle associated with the drug	Injection Needle
The information I gathered from my personal research	Personal Research
My doctor's recommendation	Doctor's Recommendation
My spouse/partner/child/family member/caregiver's opinion	Family/Friends
The recommendations or opinions of other MS patients	Other MS Patients
The recommendations of MS advocacy groups	MS Advocacy Groups

Table 2. Patient Baseline Characteristics

Patient characteristics	ROBUST (N=99)
Female Gender	80 (80.8%)
Race	
White	82 (82.8%)
Black	4 (4.0%)
Hispanic	6 (6.0%)
Asian	1 (1.0%)
Other	5 (5.0%)
Health Insurance Yes	98 (99%)
EDSS score	
<2	31 (31.3%)
2 to 4	53 (53.5%)
4.5 to 5.5	5 (5.1%)
6	10 (10.1%)
Marital Status	
Single	12 (12.1%)
Married	61 (61.7%)
Living with a partner	5 (5.1%)
Divorced	14 (14.1%)
Separated	3 (3.0%)
Widowed	3 (3.0%)
Employment Status	
Full-time for pay	42 (42.4%)
Part-time for pay	13 (13.1%)
Not working because of MS	34 (34.3%)
Not working because of other reasons	10 (10.1%)
Education	
No Degree	5 (5.1%)
General Education Development (GED)	2 (2.0%)
High School Diploma	41 (41.4%)
Bachelor's Degree	22 (22.2%)
Master's Degree	10 (10.1%)
Doctoral Degree	0
Other Degree	18 (18.2%)

Figure 1. Importance of factors considered in the selection of primary MS medication



Conclusions

- Contributing to the limited published research about factors considered by patients when selecting primary medication for their MS, this analysis found that medication effectiveness to control MS progression and doctor recommendation are the most important drivers of medication selection.

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