



MS in Belgium

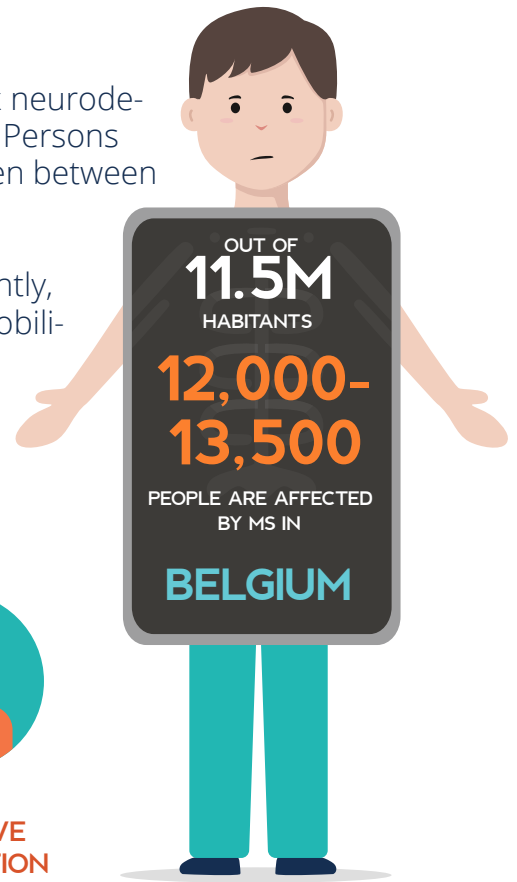


WHAT IS MS?

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a complex neurodegenerative disease. The number of Persons affected by MS is estimated between between 12,000¹ and 13,500² of the 11.5 million³ people in Belgium.

Each person will experience this unpredictable disease differently, but common symptoms often include pain, fatigue, reduced mobility and cognitive dysfunction.

There is currently no cure for MS; however, optimal treatment and support have a significant effect on disease progression and quality of life for people with MS.



PAIN



FATIGUE



REDUCED MOBILITY



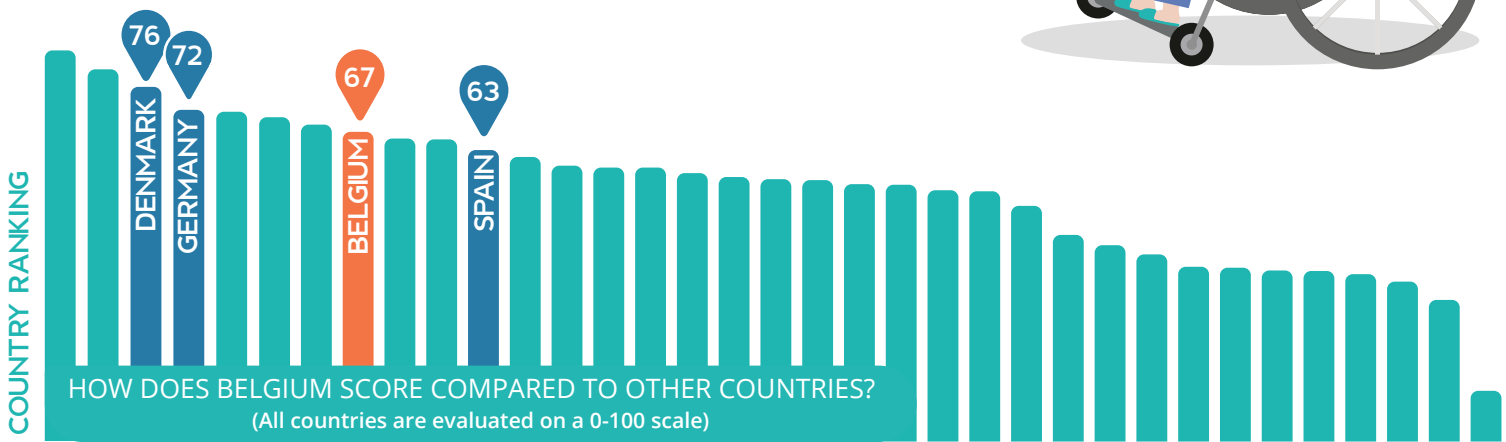
COGNITIVE DYSFUNCTION



COUNTRY CONTEXT

Health and social care services in Belgium are organised at the federal and regional levels. These two levels of government subsidise part of the social security and healthcare,⁴ and this can result in geographic disparities in the delivery of care and services.

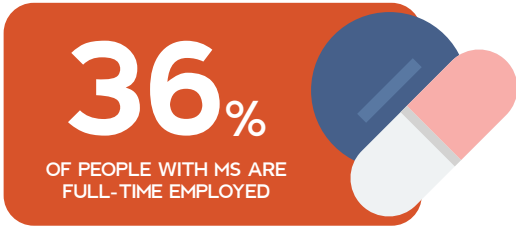
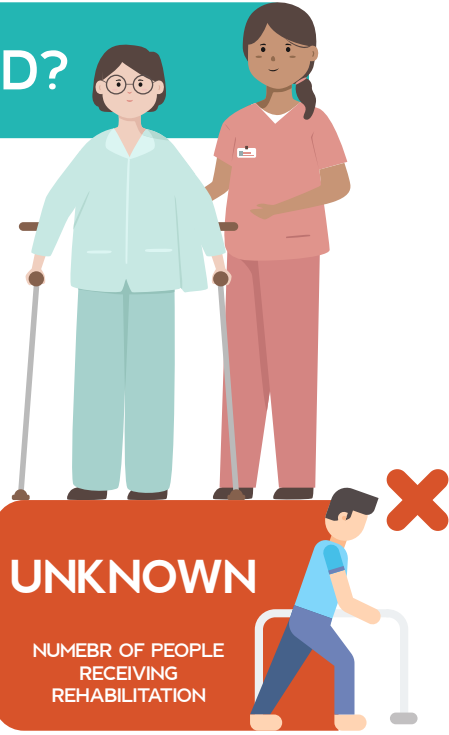
In addition, there are co-payments and user charges for services such as general practitioner and specialist consultations, inpatient hospital stays, physiotherapy and pharmaceuticals. Allowances provide financial support to the most disadvantaged groups of people.





WHAT DID THE BAROMETER FIND?

Recent improvements in MS care in Belgium include a greater focus on the needs of young people and paediatric MS, as well as the establishment of the BELTRIMS treatment registry. However, some challenges persist:



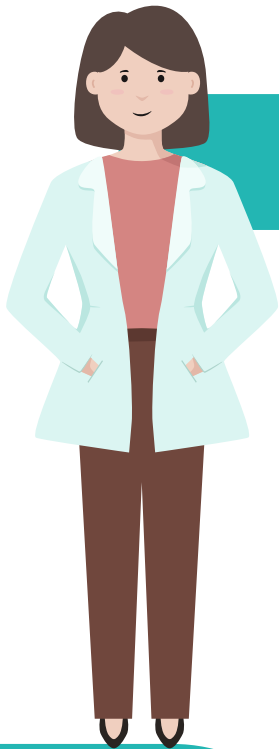
Just 36% of the MS population are in full-time employment.



Only 24% of the MS population are in part-time employment.



The numbers of people with MS receiving physical, occupational, cognitive or psychological rehabilitation are not known.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish a mandatory national disease registry which collects epidemiological, therapeutic, rehabilitation and patient-reported data.



Reduce delays between European Medicines Agency approval of new therapies and national reimbursement.

Provide MS-specific financial support to help people with MS to complete their education and find and maintain employment.



More information can be found at www.emsp.org or contact info@ms-sep.be

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1. MS International Federation. Atlas of MS. Available from: <https://www.atlasofms.org/map/global/epidemiology/number-of-people-with-ms> [Accessed 02/03/21]
2. Charcot Foundation - The difference in the estimates is due to the absence of an official MS register
3. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2019. World Population Prospects 2019, Online Edition, Rev. 1. Available from: <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>
4. OECD/European Observatory on Health Systems Policies. 2019. Belgium: Country Health Profile 2019. State of Health in the EU, OECD Publishing, Paris/European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, Brussels