JNNP Patient Choice

Lay Summary for:

Psychometric evaluation of the multiple sclerosis impact scale (MS(S-29)

F A H van der Linden, J J Kragt, M Klein, H M van der Ploeg, C H Polman, and B M J Uitdehaag *J Neurol Neurosur Psych* 2005;**76**:1677-1681;
doi:10.1136/jnnp.2005.065227

When patients with MS are unable to assess the inroads the disease is making on their quality of life for themselves, using self-assessment, relatives, partners, or close friends can make good proxies.

A Dutch study of 29 partners of MS patients showed that they presented an accurate picture of their partners' physical and emotional state of health when they filled in the 29 item MS questionnaire (MSIS-29) themselves.

They were asked to bear in mind the question: 'How do you think the patient experiences the impact of MS on his or her life?' Their results compared very favourably with the responses recorded by the MS patients when they filled in the same questionnaire.

Self assessment is increasingly being used to describe quality of life, the impact of the disease, and levels of disability. But it relies on the ability of the assessor to fully understand the questions and make reliable judgments about their situation. And that's can be a tall order if the patient is severely depressed or their intellect is impaired, say the authors.