

Enhancing Participation, Activity and Autonomy of People with Multiple Sclerosis.

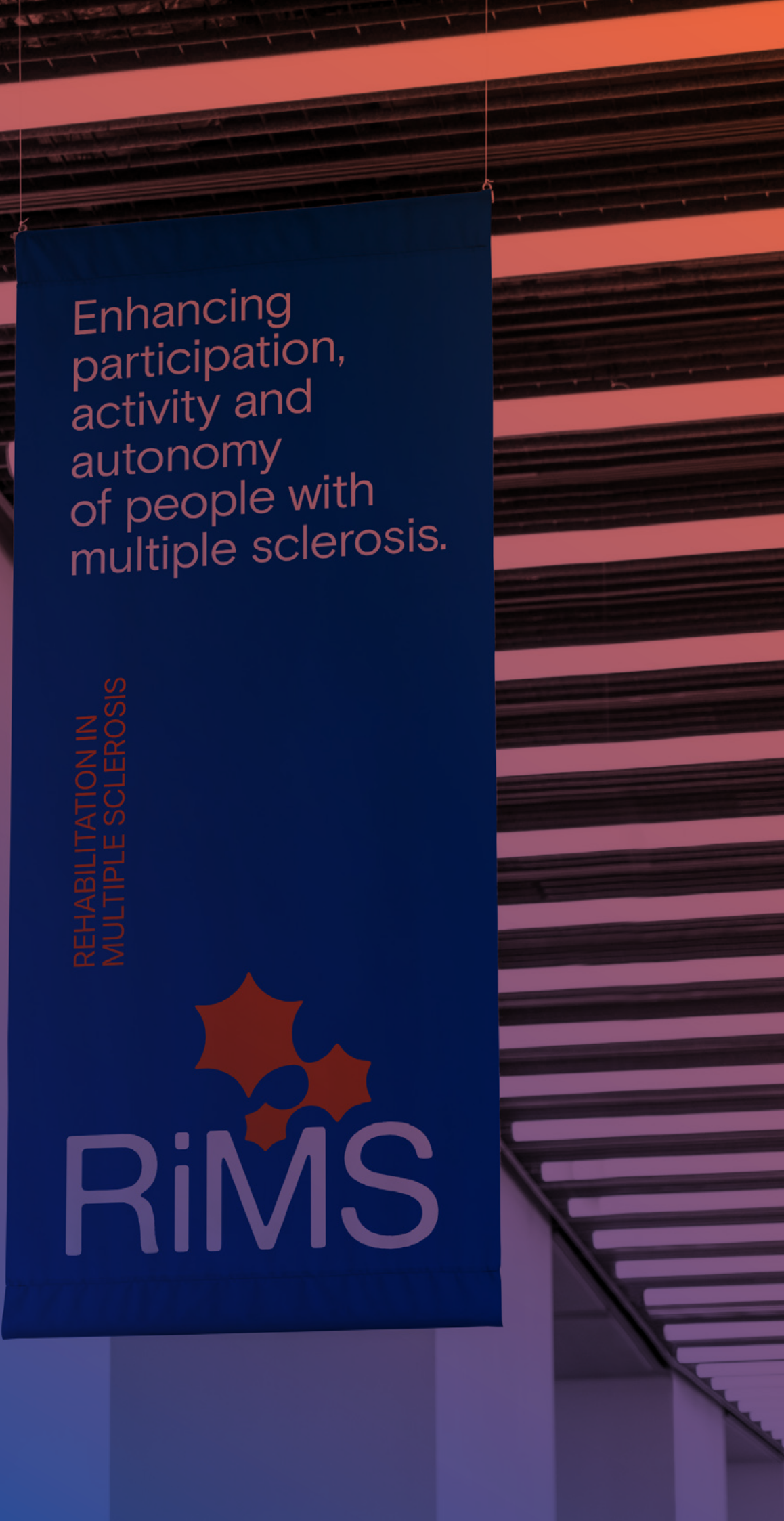
Activity Report

2024



RiMS

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR
BEST PRACTICE AND RESEARCH
IN MS REHABILITATION



RiMS 2024 Activity Report

Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT	05
01. ABOUT RiMS	07
Executive Board	08
Advisory Board	09
RiMS Members in 2024	10
Our Partners	12
Partnership Works	13
02. SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIG)	15
Mobility	16
Bladder, Bowel & Sexuality	18
Patient Autonomy	20
Occupation	22
Mood & Cognition	24
Communication & Swallowing	26
03. OUR ACTIVITIES	29
RiMS Webinars	30
Annual RiMS Conference	31
RiMS Grant Programme	32
RiMS Fellowship Programme	33
Project PROMS Global Initiative	34
FUNDING	36
CONTACT INFORMATION	37
RiMS MEMBERSHIPS & ACCOUNTS	38
MEMBERSHIP TYPES & FEES	39

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A Message from the President

Dear RiMS Members, Colleagues, and Friends,

Looking back on 2024, I am proud of what our community has accomplished together. This year was marked by growth, innovation, and meaningful collaboration across all aspects of MS rehabilitation.

A highlight was the 29th Annual RiMS Conference in Hasselt, Belgium, where we gathered under the theme Empowerment & Inclusivity. Hosted in close partnership with Hasselt University, Noorderhart Rehabilitation & MS, and the UMSC University MS Centre, the conference showcased advances in neuroplasticity, digital health, fatigue, mobility, and psychological care. It was more than a scientific meeting—it was a celebration of connection, exchange, and shared purpose.

Our Special Interest Groups continued to drive progress in areas ranging from mobility and cognition to bladder, bowel & sexuality, occupation, and patient autonomy. Their meetings and projects not only advanced science but also generated practical insights that directly benefit people living with MS.

Beyond the conference, our webinar series provided high-quality education and a platform for emerging researchers. The Fellowship Programme supported young professionals, encouraging international exchange and multidisciplinary collaboration. Meanwhile, our involvement in international initiatives such as the PROMS Global Initiative strengthened our commitment to keeping the patient voice at the heart of care and research.

In 2024, RiMS also launched its strategic engagement with European funding programmes, laying the first cornerstone for our participation in EU projects.

None of this would be possible without you—our members, partners, and friends. Thank you for your commitment and energy. Together, we will continue shaping a future where rehabilitation is accessible, evidence-based, and empowering for all.

Giampaolo Brichetto
President, RiMS





About RiMS

RiMS is the international network for best practice and research in Multiple Sclerosis rehabilitation. We bring together healthcare professionals, researchers, and patient organisations to enhance activity, participation, and autonomy for people living with Multiple Sclerosis.

➤ OUR VISION

We envision a future where all people with Multiple Sclerosis across Europe have timely access to high-quality, evidence-based rehabilitation that is tailored to their individual needs. Rehabilitation is a personalised process of learning and adaptation that empowers individuals with Multiple Sclerosis to maximise independence, participation, and overall quality of life. Through shared expertise and commitment, we strive to ensure these opportunities are available to everyone who needs them.

➤ OUR MISSION

Our mission is to develop and promote evidence-based rehabilitation that enables people with Multiple Sclerosis to live full, active, and independent lives. We aim to raise the profile of Multiple Sclerosis rehabilitation, deepen understanding of its importance at every stage of the condition, and encourage strong collaboration between researchers and clinicians. By doing so, we generate new evidence, support proven practices, and help professionals integrate the latest knowledge into daily care.



Scan here for more information about us
www.rehabinms.org/about-us

Executive Board

RIMS is led by an Executive Board, the driving force behind the society's vision and activities. In line with the by-laws, the Board is made up of eight elected officers who bring diverse expertise and perspectives to the table. Among them are the President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer, each playing a key role in shaping the strategy, ensuring transparency, and managing resources responsibly. Working together, the Executive Board steers RIMS forward, fostering collaboration, innovation, and growth for the entire community.



Giampaolo Brichetto
President
Rehabilitation Physician
MD-PhD, Genova (IT)



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Vice-President &
Membership Officer
Clinical Psychologist
Nottingham (UK)



Anders Skjerbaek
Treasurer & Education Officer
Physiotherapist
MSc, Ry and Haslev (DK)



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MD-PhD, Milan (IT)



Lousin Moundjian
SIG Officer
Physiotherapist
Hasselt (BE)



Jana Pöttgen
Fellowship Officer
Psychologist
Hamburg (DE)



Griet Gysemberg
RiGra Officer
Rehabilitation Physician
MD, Hasselt (BE)



Lars Hvid
Communication Officer
Exercise Physiologist
Aarhus (DK)

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is composed of five to six members drawn from the founding members of RIMS. With their experience and long-standing commitment, they provide valuable guidance and insight to the Executive Board. Acting as trusted advisors, they support decision-making, share perspectives from the society's origins, and help ensure continuity and stability. Their role is to assist the leadership in navigating challenges and opportunities, while keeping the vision and values of RIMS at the heart of its development.



Prof. Peter Feys
Hasselt University (BE)



Prof. Ulrik Dalgas
Aarhus University (DK)



Prof. John Deluca
Kessler Foundation (US)



Prof. Alan Thompson
University College London
Hospitals (UK)



Prof. Mario Battaglia
Italian MS Society
(AISM) (IT)



Prof. Vincent de Groot
VUMC (NL)



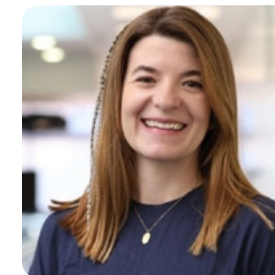
Dr. Claude Vaney
Bernier Klinik Montana (CH)



Dr. Anne Helme
MS International Federation



Mr. Herbert Temmes
European MS Platform



Mrs. Clare Walton
MS Society (UK)



Prof. Daphne Kos
National MS Centre Melsbroek
& KU Leuven (BE)

RiMS Members in 2024

RiMS members include centres, organisations, groups and individuals such as students, researchers, clinicians, educators, and therapists. In 2024, the network comprised 31 Centre Memberships, 99 Individual Memberships, and 38 Student Memberships, with members based across Europe and beyond.

The RiMS Secretariat, in close collaboration with the RiMS Membership Officer, keeps updated contact details of all members.



Scan here for more information about
the RiMS Members

➤ RiMS CENTRE MEMBERS

- * Aarhus University
- * A.I.S.M. Italian Multiple Sclerosis Association
- * Amsterdam UMC
- * Asociación de Esclerosis Múltiple de Bizkaia (Adembi)
- * Catholic University of the Sacred Heart
- * Centre d'Esclerosi Múltiple de Catalunya (Cemcat)
- * Domov sv. Josefa
- * Don Gnocchi Foundation
- * Fundació Esclerosi Múltiple
- * Hasselt University
- * Helse Bergen
- * Istituto Neurologico "Carlo Besta" Fondazione IRCCS
- * Italian Auxological Institute IRCCS
- * Izmir University Of Economics
- * KU Leuven
- * Maskun neurologinen kuntoutuskeskus
- * MS Center Hakadal AS
- * MS Ireland
- * National MS Center Melsbroek
- * Nord University Norway
- * Schweizerische Multiple Sklerose Gesellschaft
- * Sclerosehospitalet Haslev
- * SM Spółka z o. o. Centrum Rehabilitacji SM
- * University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf
- * University Medical Center Groningen
- * University of Ferrara
- * UKD | University Hospital Dresden 'Carl Gustav Carus'

Our Partners



The Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers (CMSC), founded in 1986, is a multidisciplinary, member-driven organisation focused on enhancing the standard of care for people living with Multiple Sclerosis. With more than 250 member centres across North America and over 12,000 healthcare professionals – including neurologists, nurses, therapists, psychologists, and social workers – CMSC promotes clinical excellence through leadership in research, education, advocacy, and knowledge sharing.

For more information, please visit www.mscares.org



The European Multiple Sclerosis Platform (EMSP) is a pan-European umbrella organisation representing national MS societies from across Europe. Its mission is to ensure the voice of people affected by MS is heard, to drive advocacy and awareness, and to work towards high-quality equitable care and research. EMSP leads key initiatives to improve the quality of life for people living with MS through policy influence, education, data collection (like the MS Barometer), and cross-border projects.

For more information, please visit www.emsp.org



ECTRIMS is the world's largest professional organization dedicated to advancing the understanding and treatment of Multiple Sclerosis through rigorous scientific exchange. Its signature is the annual ECTRIMS Congress, a leading international forum for researchers and clinicians to share cutting-edge MS findings. ECTRIMS also funds fellowships, supports collaborative multicentre research, and plays a key role in shaping clinical practice guidelines across Europe. A joint RIMS-ECTRIMS conference is organised every 3 years.

For more information, please visit www.ectrims.eu



The International Journal of MS Care (IJMSC) is the official peer-reviewed publication of the Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers (CMSC) and leading MS nursing organisations. It focuses on the comprehensive management of MS and related disorders, publishing high-quality articles on clinical care, rehabilitation, psychosocial issues, and innovations in MS management. IJMSC serves as an essential resource for healthcare professionals involved in MS care, delivering evidence-based insights and practical guidance to enhance patient outcomes.

For more information, please visit www.ijmsc.org



The Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MSIF) is a unique global network of MS organisations, individuals, and healthcare experts working together to improve the lives of people affected by MS worldwide. MSIF drives international collaboration in research, advocacy, and awareness, aiming to find effective treatments and ultimately a cure. Through initiatives like the Atlas of MS, campaigns for access to treatment, and global education efforts, MSIF plays a crucial role in uniting and amplifying the global MS community.

For more information, please visit www.msif.org



Multiple Sclerosis Journal (MSJ) is a leading peer-reviewed international journal published by SAGE. It covers clinical and translational research on MS and related disorders—including diagnostics and biomarkers, neuroimaging, rehabilitation and psychosocial care, epidemiology and health services, and trials and therapeutics. MSJ publishes original studies, authoritative reviews, and expert perspectives to keep clinicians and scientists up to date with advances in MS science and care.

For more information, please visit www.journals.sagepub.com/home/msj



The World Federation for NeuroRehabilitation (WFNR) is a global multidisciplinary organisation dedicated to advancing the field of neurorehabilitation. Bringing together healthcare professionals, researchers, and patient organisations, WFNR fosters collaboration to improve neurorehabilitation practices and patient outcomes worldwide. Through its congresses, educational resources, special interest groups, and international guidelines, WFNR promotes innovation and the dissemination of knowledge across all areas of neurological recovery.

For more information, please visit www.wfnr.co.uk

Partnership Work



MS NURSE PRO 2024

Within the multidisciplinary team, MS nurses have a key central role in the care and support for people living with multiple sclerosis (PwMS) and their families. Despite this central role, training opportunities for MS nurses are often limited, partly due to a lack in specific training, partly due to the time constraints and staffing shortages that nurses face today.

At the heart of MS Nurse PRO is a suite of seven accredited e-learning courses, each designed to provide a thorough grounding in both clinical knowledge and practical nursing skills. The programme allows nurses to learn at their own pace, offering flexibility that fits around busy professional schedules.

The courses include testimonials from nurses describing their roles and the challenges they encounter, examples of real-world nursing research stories and Nursing tips to help the nurses understand the research processes and ways in which it can be implemented in practice. After completing each module, a test can be taken to obtain a certificate.

Today, MS Nurse PRO has +1800 active members, +300 new members every year across the world, +450 accredited e-learning courses completed each year, +300 participants yearly in live educational events. MS Nurse pro is endorsed in 17 European countries and Japan, representing 2,6 million people with MS worldwide.

In addition to a training programme, MS Nurse PRO is also a platform for consulting and collaborating with colleagues and MS experts from the national and international MS community, with the aim of supporting and empowering MS nurses by sharing best practices and networking with colleagues in Europe.

MS Nurse PRO wants to contribute together with the European MS Nurse to better and higher quality care and support for PwMS and their families.

* **Piet Eelen** - Chair Scientific Committee

* **Dominika Czarnota-Szałkowska** – Chair Steering Committee

OUR ACCREDITED E-LEARNING COURSES

1. Understanding Multiple Sclerosis
2. Clinical Presentation of Multiple Sclerosis
3. Diagnosing and Assessing Multiple Sclerosis
4. Treating Multiple Sclerosis
5. Care and Support
6. Rehabilitation in Multiple Sclerosis
7. Research in MS Nursing Practice



Join MS Nurse PRO Today
www.msnursepro.org

Special Interest Groups (SIG)

The Executive Board of RiMS has established several Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to advance rehabilitation research and practice for people living with Multiple Sclerosis. Each SIG brings together professionals, researchers, and clinicians to collaborate on specific topics, stimulate evidence-based rehabilitation, and support people with Multiple Sclerosis and their caregivers.

SIGs are guided by appointed chairs and co-chairs, and benefit from the collective expertise of their members. These groups meet annually at the RiMS Conference and are encouraged to hold interim workshops throughout the year. Active SIGs also receive financial support from RiMS to foster their initiatives.

By creating a space for shared knowledge, innovative thinking, and cross-disciplinary collaboration, the SIGs play a vital role in translating research into practice and in addressing the diverse challenges faced by people with Multiple Sclerosis. They also serve as dynamic networks where professionals can exchange ideas, strengthen partnerships, and develop new approaches that truly make a difference.

Currently, RiMS supports six active SIGs, each dedicated to a key aspect of rehabilitation:

- BLADDER, BOWEL & SEXUALITY
- COMMUNICATION & SWALLOWING
- MOBILITY
- OCCUPATION
- PATIENT AUTONOMY
- MOOD & COGNITION



Scan here for more information about our SIGs
www.rehabinms.org/interest-groups

SIG Report Mobility



Ludovico Pedullà,
Chair, Italy



Ellen Christin Arntzen,
Co-chair, Norway

ABOUT US

The Special Interest Group (SIG) on Mobility is a European initiative within RiMS that unites healthcare professionals and researchers to enhance mobility outcomes for people with Multiple Sclerosis (PwMS). Founded on a commitment to evidence-based rehabilitation, this group fosters innovation through regular meetings, multidisciplinary collaboration, and active knowledge exchange. With a strong focus on clinical impact, SIG Mobility plays a key role in shaping practices and policies related to mobility in Multiple Sclerosis care across Europe.

SIG IN-BETWEEN MEETING

Bench-to-bedside physical rehabilitation: embracing patients across the disability continuum

OCT. 3-4, 2024 | AARHUS, DENMARK

About 46 MS HPs and researchers (neurologists, physiotherapists, rehabilitation physicians, sports scientists) took part in the in-between meeting held on 3-4 October 2024 at Aarhus University and the Danish MS Centres, Aarhus (Denmark).

The first day was dedicated to invited keynotes and free presentations. Prof. Ulrik Dalgas presented on the current state of evidence on the effects of exercise in PwMS, outlining the most recent findings and clinical implications. Then, Prof. John Brincks delivered a lecture on unwrapping the "black box" of balance training in PwMS, highlighting both mechanisms and intervention strategies. The final keynote, by Prof. Massimiliano Pau, focused on emerging technologies to improve efficacy in exercise and rehabilitation for people with MS, such as wearable sensors, virtual reality, and telerehabilitation. Free presentations further enriched the programme with new research contributions from participants.

The second day was dedicated to hands-on workshops. Participants engaged in sessions on hippotherapy, MS Boxing, MS Ballroom Fitness, and incorporating nature into rehabilitation. These workshops provided practical skills and fostered discussion on how to expand rehabilitation strategies across the disability continuum in PwMS.

The meeting successfully bridged research and practice, giving participants opportunities to gain both theoretical insights and practical competencies.

SIG MEETING

Prevalence, types, and pharmacological treatment of pain in MS

JUN. 27, 2024 | HASSELT, BELGIUM

Around 85 MS health professionals (HPs) and researchers (neurologists, physiotherapists, rehabilitation physicians, and sports scientists) participated in the joint meeting held at Hasselt University, Hasselt (Belgium) on 27th June 2024.

The aim of the meeting was to address pain in MS from different perspectives, ranging from prevalence and pharmacological treatment to assessment principles and case-based comprehensive management.

After a short introduction, four expert lectures were delivered. First, Dr. Claudio Solaro presented on the prevalence, types, and pharmacological treatment of pain in MS. He highlighted both neuropathic and musculoskeletal pain, and emerging therapeutic approaches. Then, Dr. Cigdem Yilmazer provided an overview of "pain assessment principles and outcome measures", stressing the importance of reliable and valid tools for both clinical and research purposes.

In the following lecture, Dr. An Van Nunen explored the bio-psycho-social model of pain management in MS, emphasising the role of interdisciplinary and patient-centred care. Finally, Dr. Famke Vanderhauwaert presented a case report of comprehensive care of pain in MS, illustrating the practical application of integrated management strategies.

The meeting was well received, with lively discussion and active participation. Attendees valued the possibility to exchange expertise and perspectives on a complex but highly relevant symptom in MS care.

CURRENT PROJECT

Hearts: Physical Activity Factors Among People Living with Multiple Sclerosis

This global study, coordinated by RiMS, investigates self-reported physical activity levels in persons with MS across all disability levels and across countries within and beyond Europe. The study examines contextual factors such as living environment, work activity, and individual motivation. Insights gained will support health professionals in promoting and facilitating physical activity through tailored, realistic, and effective programmes.

Participating countries and contact persons:

* Australia	Yvonne Learmonth
* Belgium	Lousin Moumdjian
* Brazil	Cintia Ramari Ferreira
* Czech Republic	Klara Novotna
* Germany	Barbara Von-Glasenapp
* Greece	Antonia Kaltsatou
* Ireland	Susan Coote
* Israel	Alon Kalron
* Italy	Ludovico Pedullà
* Norway	Ellen Christin Arntzen
* Serbia	Una Nedeljkovic
* Spain	Carme Santoyo
* UK (England)	Antonios Stavropoulos-Kalinoglou
* UK (Scotland)	Marietta Von der Linden

FUTURE PLANS | WEBINAR

SIG Mobility contributed in the planning of RiMS webinars with one sessions dedicated to the results from two qualitative studies.

Physical activity: what matters from the patient's perspective?

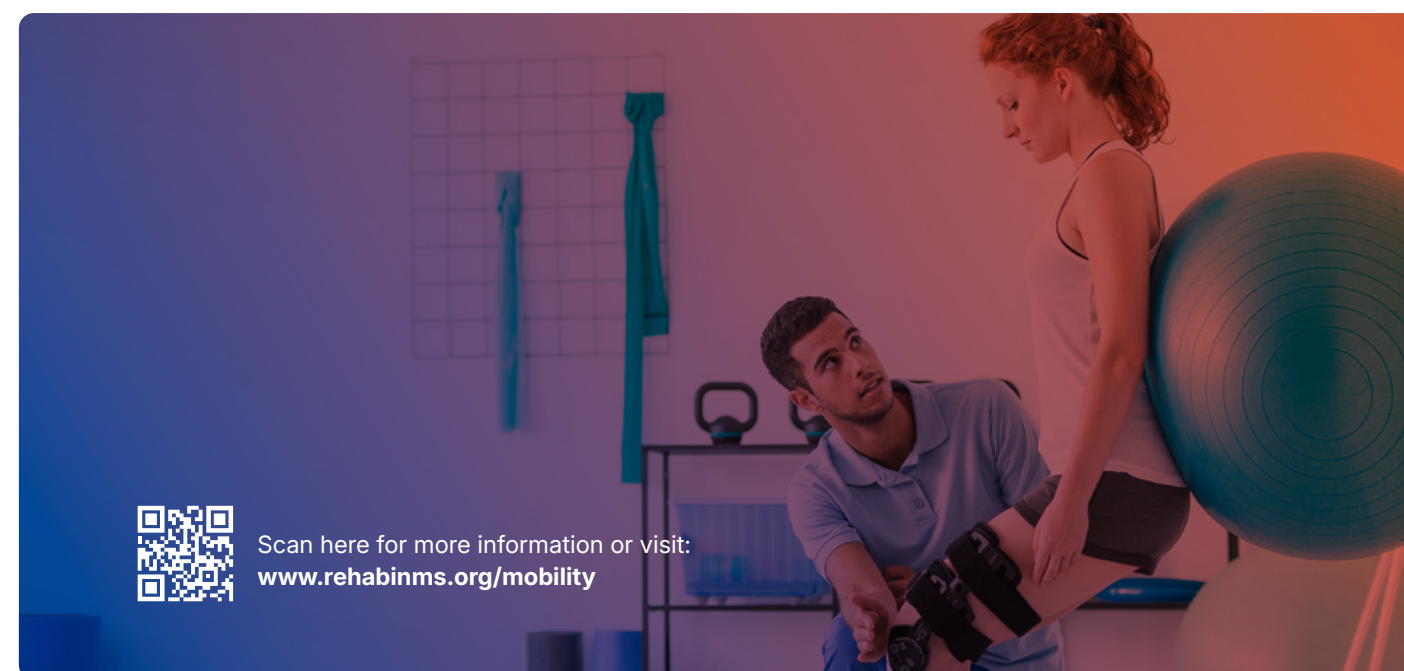
Our upcoming RiMS webinar will be based on results from two qualitative in-depth interview studies (Dahl et al., 2024) exploring the meaningfulness of physical activity in people with MS. Suggested complementary speakers:

- * **Dr. Stine Susanne Haakonsen Dahl** (Nord University, Norway) presenting findings on lived experiences of outdoor physiotherapy and bodily re-explorations.
- * **Dr. Ellen Christin Arntzen** (co-author and collaborator) providing clinical and rehabilitation perspectives on integrating patient experiences into practice.

This webinar will stimulate reflection and discussion on how to align physical activity interventions with what matters most to people with MS.



Scan here for more information or visit:
www.rehabinms.org/mobility



SIG Report Bladder, Bowel & Sexuality



Corinne Oosterlinck,
Chair, Belgium



Edyta Matusik,
Co-chair, Poland

ABOUT US

The Special Interest Group (SIG) on Bladder, Bowel & Sexuality is committed to advancing evidence-based care for people with Multiple Sclerosis (PwMS) who experience urological, bowel, or sexual dysfunctions.

Through collaborative research, shared expertise, and international exchange, the SIG strives to raise awareness, improve clinical practices, and encourage innovation in this often underrepresented area of Multiple Sclerosis care.

SIG MEETING

Addressing sexual dysfunction in multiple sclerosis through education and support

JUN. 27, 2024 | HASSELT, BELGIUM

During our 2024 SIG meeting in Hasselt, we focused on the topic of sexual dysfunction in people with MS, a highly prevalent but often under-addressed problem. Data indicate that sexual disorders occur in 40–80% of women and 50–90% of men with MS.

The situation in Poland illustrates some of the challenges faced in this area: there are currently only two public rehabilitation centres for MS patients, and no established structures for communication between patients and healthcare professionals regarding sexuality.

At the meeting, Edyta Matusik, PhD, and Barbara Lewicka, MD (Medical University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland) presented the preliminary results of an ongoing study. The preliminary conclusions of the study were that information, support and education of patients with MS result in improvements in sexual dysfunction. The goal is to assess the effectiveness of a personalised model of information support and education in this field.

To evaluate prevalence, the Multiple Sclerosis Intimacy and Sexuality Questionnaire (MSISQ-19) was administered. Following this assessment, participants received an individualised form of information support and education by email, tailored to their reported difficulties in sexual functioning. After six months, the same patients will be re-contacted to assess the effectiveness of these interventions.

The meeting also included a broader discussion on the management of sexual dysfunction in MS. Participants exchanged experiences and solutions used in different centres and countries. This exchange offered a wider perspective and generated new ideas that can be adapted and implemented locally.



FUTURE PLANS | WEBINAR

Urinary and intestinal disorders in the course of MS

We aim to present the final results of the ongoing Polish study once follow-up data are available, though the study group has not grown significantly. Since preliminary findings were already presented at the June SIG meeting in Belgium, we propose a new focus for our next group webinar.



Scan here for more information or visit:
www.rehabinms.org/bbs



SIG Report Patient Autonomy



Anne Rahn,
Chair, Germany



Andrea Giordano,
Co-chair, Italy

➤ ABOUT US

The Special Interest Group (SIG) Patient Autonomy is dedicated to enhancing the role of people with Multiple Sclerosis (PwMS) in making informed decisions about their health. Our work centres around shared decision-making (SDM), evidence-based patient information (EBPI), and supporting self-management strategies.

By fostering international collaboration and promoting tools to support patient autonomy, we aim to ensure that individuals with MS are not only informed but empowered participants in their care journey.

➤ SIG MEETING

Update on current projects and a discussion about the future of our SIG

JUN. 27, 2024 | HASSELT, BELGIUM

During the RiMS Conference in Hasselt on 27 June 2024, our SIG organised a dedicated meeting attended by around 20 participants. The group included MS health professionals and researchers such as neurologists, psychologists, nurses, and health scientists. The two-hour session combined invited talks with updates on ongoing projects and a forward-looking discussion on the role and direction of the SIG. The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on progress, exchange expertise, and engage in dialogue about future initiatives that could strengthen patient autonomy in MS rehabilitation.

➤ ONGOING PROJECT

The NIPS project (Needs of people with primary progressive MS – RiGra project)

The NIPS project is an international collaborative initiative that aims to explore the needs of people with primary progressive MS (PwPPMS). Supported by the RiMS Grant Programme 2020, the project is being conducted in three phases. The first phase consisted of a scoping review of the needs, experiences, and knowledge of PwPPMS. The second phase involved a qualitative study with PwPPMS and healthcare professionals to identify specific needs in daily life and care. The ongoing third phase is a cross-cultural online survey designed to gather insights from healthcare professionals to achieve a deeper understanding of the challenges and unmet needs of PwPPMS.

The collaboration network includes several leading European institutions: Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Neurologico Carlo Besta in Milan, the Nursing Research Unit of the University of Lübeck, the Institute for Neuroimmunology and Multiple Sclerosis at the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf, the School of Health Sciences at the University of Galway, the Multiple Sclerosis Centre of Catalonia (Cemcat) at Vall d'Hebron University Hospital in Barcelona, the Department of Neurology and Centre of Clinical Neuroscience at Charles University in Prague, and the Department of Health Services Research at Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg.

➤ ONGOING PROJECT

The MoMS project (Motherhood choice in MS)

The MoMS project focuses on exploring knowledge and information needs regarding pregnancy and motherhood decisions among people with MS. This collaborative effort brings together several key partners. The project is coordinated by Professor Rahn at the Nursing Research Unit, Institute for Social Medicine and Epidemiology, University of Lübeck. Other partners include Christoph Heesen at the University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf; Alessandra Solari and Andrea Giordano at the Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Neurologico C. Besta in Milan; Ingrid Galan, Miguel Ángel Robles Sánchez, and Edwin Roger Meza Murillo at the MS Centre of Catalonia (Cemcat), Vall Hebron Barcelona Hospital Campus; and Klara Novotna at the MS Centre, Department of Neurology and Centre of Clinical Neuroscience, First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University and General University Hospital in Prague.

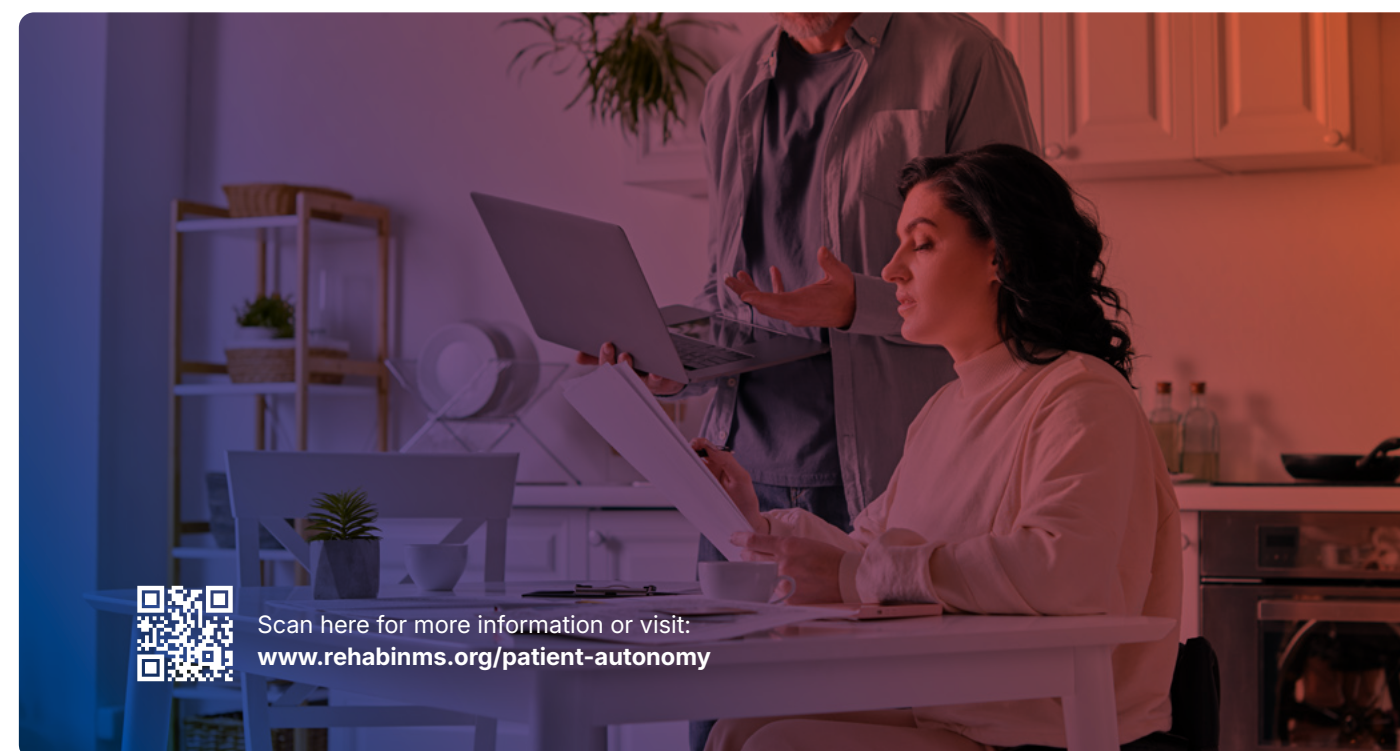
➤ FUTURE PLANS | WEBINAR

Behavior change interventions in MS

Looking ahead, our SIG proposes to organise a RiMS webinar on the topic of behavior change interventions in MS. Two complementary speakers have been identified to address this theme from different perspectives: Claudia Marck from Australia, who will focus on patient-centred approaches to behaviour change, and Karin Riemann-Lorenz from Germany, who will discuss evidence-based strategies and clinical implementation.

During the meeting, participants also raised open questions concerning the structure of the RiMS Conference itself, in particular whether it would be possible to organise SIG meetings outside of parallel sessions in order to allow greater participation and cross-fertilisation between groups.

The future of the SIG Patient Autonomy will continue to be shaped by ongoing projects such as NIPS and MoMS. Building on these collaborative efforts, the group will work to further strengthen research, clinical practice, and patient empowerment in MS rehabilitation.



Scan here for more information or visit:
www.rehabinms.org/patient-autonomy

SIG Report Occupation



Inger Grethe Loyning,
Chair, Norway



Sofie Ferdinand,
Co-chair, Belgium

➤ ABOUT US

The Special Interest Group (SIG) on Occupation is an interdisciplinary network of health care professionals with an interest in enhancing activity and participation for persons with MS. We welcome colleagues who are clinicians, researchers and educators.

Our overall goal is to unite evidence-based and practice-based knowledge and skills and to explore the ways in which gaps in knowledge can be presented in order to enable, enhance and empower participation in persons with MS.

➤ SIG MEETING

Update on ongoing projects, Fall assessment

JUN. 27, 2024 | HASSELT, BELGIUM

The SIG Occupation meeting took place during the Annual RiMS Conference in Hasselt, Belgium, in June 2024. The two-hour session was organised jointly with the SIG Bladder, Bowel, and Sexual Dysfunction (BBS). Around 23 participants attended, including occupational therapists, physiotherapists, MS nurses, neurologists, and researchers.

The meeting was dedicated to introductions, networking, and a presentation on the OTiMS project, followed by a short update on ongoing projects. The group also addressed the topic of falls assessment.

In 2024, the group did not hold an in-between meeting outside of the RiMS conference.

➤ ONGOING PROJECTS

Evidence-based Occupational Therapy in Multiple Sclerosis: Theory and Practice (OTiMS) – A Cochrane Project

The OTiMS project aims to build a comprehensive picture of the evidence base for occupational therapy in MS and its quality. Its goals are to provide timely recommendations for both research and practice, and to develop effective methods for implementing evidence in clinical settings. The project team includes Daphne Kos, Isaline Eijssen, Sinéad Hynes, Tryde Bekkering, Marja Koen, Leen De Coninck, Ciara O'Meara, and Jennifer Freeman. In 2024, a survey was distributed to explore occupational therapy clinical practice and the use of evidence-based resources and guidelines.

Improving the Quality of Clinical Trials on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Neuropsychological Rehabilitation (NPR)

This project, led by Roshan das Nair together with Blanca De Dios Perez, Daphne Kos, Päivi Hämäläinen, Jessica Podda, Helen Ford, Helena Jidborg, and Inger Løyning, aims to explore barriers and facilitators identified by researchers and clinicians in conducting VR and NPR trials. The goal is to develop guidelines to improve the design and quality of VR and NPR interventions.

➤ FUTURE PLANS

In February 2025, SIG Occupation hosts a RiMS webinar on Occupational Therapy in MS, where preliminary results of the OTiMS project are presented.

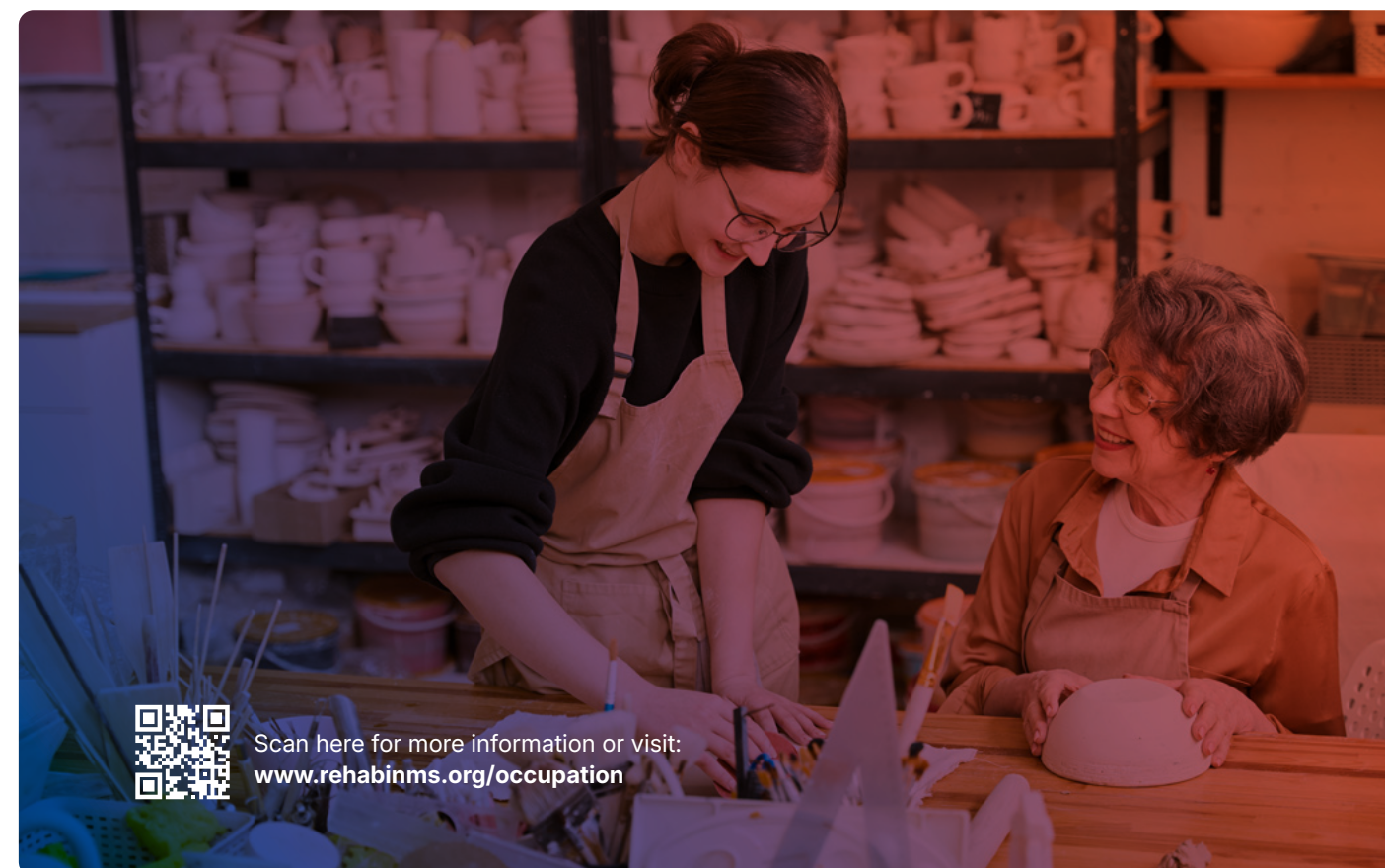
In July 2025, the SIG collaborates again with the OTiMS project to host a second webinar. This event presents the project's final results and included an interactive component that allowed participants to share their thoughts on barriers and facilitators for implementing evidence into clinical practice.

Additionally, SIG Occupation will hold a two-hour meeting during the ECTRIMS Congress in Barcelona, Spain, on Wednesday, 24 September 2025.

The next in-between meeting is scheduled for 13–14 March 2026, jointly with SIG Bladder, Bowel, and Sexual Dysfunction. The meeting will be locally hosted by the Danish Sclerosis Hospital in Haslev. The preliminary topic for this meeting is "The impact of menopause on MS".

Suggested RiMS Webinar Topic

As the OTiMS project is approaching its conclusion, the final stage will focus on the implementation of new evidence into clinical practice. The project team proposes a RiMS webinar to present the results so far and to gather feedback on barriers and facilitators for implementing evidence-based practices. This interactive session would allow the broader RiMS community to contribute and share their perspectives.



Scan here for more information or visit:
www.rehabinms.org/occupation

SIG Report Mood & Cognition



Jessica Podda,
Chair, Italy



Blanca De Dios Pérez,
Co-chair, United Kingdom

➤ SIG IN-BETWEEN MEETING

Introducing the new SIG name “Mood and Cognition” and presentations on multisensory processing in MS and effective communication of MS misdiagnosis

NOV. 4, 2024 | ONLINE MEETING

On 4 November 2024, our SIG held a digital meeting with 18 participants. This one-and-a-half-hour session focused on presenting the new name of the group, Mood and Cognition, and explaining the rationale behind this change. The rebranding reflects our aim to broaden the scope of the SIG to include a wider range of professionals beyond psychology and neuropsychology, thereby fostering a more multidisciplinary and inclusive network.

Two invited talks formed the core of the meeting. Dr. Alice Bollini (Italy) delivered a presentation on “Multisensory Processing Breakdown in Multiple Sclerosis: Insights into Early-Onset Brain Aging,” while Dr. Angela Baufeldt (United Kingdom) presented “Communicating a misdiagnosis of multiple sclerosis in a way to reduce distress for patients and clinicians.” Both talks were very well received and sparked meaningful discussion among participants.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to share the RiMS survey on the design of randomised controlled trials (RCTs) for vocational and cognitive rehabilitation, which continues to collect responses. The session concluded with an open discussion on the future aims of the SIG and potential areas for new research collaborations, such as paediatric MS and transitions from child to adult services.

➤ ABOUT US

The Special Interest Group (SIG) Mood & Cognition is dedicated to enhancing the understanding, treatment, and integration of psychological and neuropsychological care in the rehabilitation of people with Multiple Sclerosis (PwMS).

By combining scientific research, clinical expertise, and cross-border collaboration, the SIG promotes evidence-based approaches to support the emotional and cognitive wellbeing of individuals living with Multiple Sclerosis. Its meetings encourage open dialogue, shared challenges, and mutual support among practitioners and researchers.

➤ SIG MEETING

The use of telerehabilitation and digital technologies to conduct assessments and provide support to people living with MS and their caregivers

JUN. 27, 2024 | HASSELT, BELGIUM

On 27 June 2024, our SIG organised a two-hour meeting in Hasselt, Belgium, during the Annual RiMS Conference, with the participation of 24 MS health professionals and researchers. The theme of the meeting was “The use of telerehabilitation and digital technologies to conduct assessments and provide support to people living with MS and their caregivers.”

During the first part of the session, Teresa L'Abbate, Angela Boschetti, and Giacinto Barresi presented preliminary results on the use of technology for both assessment and rehabilitation purposes. Their contributions highlighted the growing potential of digital tools to enhance accessibility and quality of care for people with MS.

In the second part of the meeting, Blanca de Dios Perez (new co-chair) and Jessica Podda (chair) introduced the RiMS survey on “Improving the quality of clinical trials of Vocational Rehabilitation and Neuropsychological Rehabilitation in MS.” Participants were invited to complete the survey and to share comments and suggestions on its design. The meeting concluded with a fruitful discussion on the role of telerehabilitation in MS rehabilitation and research, underlining the value of digital health solutions in daily practice.

➤ ONGOING PROJECTS

The SIG Mood and Cognition is currently working on broadening its focus beyond psychology and neuropsychology in order to build a more comprehensive and inclusive network. This decision was motivated by the observation that participation in the group had been lower than expected, partly because clinicians and researchers outside psychology perceived the group as not directly relevant to them. The renaming to Mood and Cognition is therefore a commitment to welcoming professionals from diverse backgrounds, including psychologists, neuropsychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses, and speech therapists. With this wider scope, the SIG aims to strengthen multidisciplinary collaboration, advance research, and enhance support for people with MS.

A central project at present is the RiMS survey on the challenges of designing and conducting randomised controlled trials (RCTs) in vocational rehabilitation (VR) and neuropsychological rehabilitation (NPR). This initiative involves members from both the SIG Occupation and the SIG Mood and Cognition. The principal investigator is Prof. Roshan das Nair (University of Nottingham), with contributions from partners across Europe, including Blanca de Dios Perez, Prof. Daphne Kos, Dr. Jessica Podda, Adj. Prof. Päivi Hämäläinen, Inger Løyning, Helena Jidborg, and Prof. Helen Ford, among others. To date, the survey has collected 38 responses from nine countries, and efforts are ongoing to expand the sample size by involving additional groups.

Looking ahead, the SIG is also exploring new research directions such as paediatric MS, focusing on rehabilitation needs, the lived experience of young people with MS, and transitions from child to adult services. These areas reflect the group's commitment to diversifying its scope and fostering innovative, multidisciplinary research.

➤ FUTURE PLANS | WEBINAR



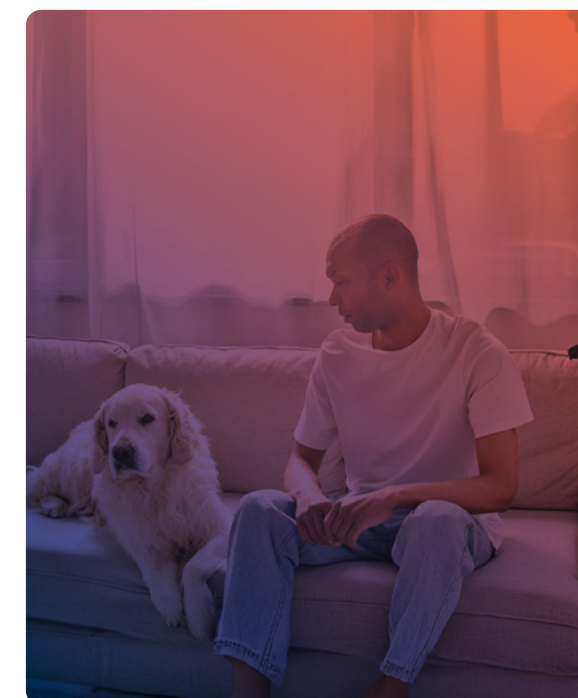
For the upcoming RiMS webinar, we suggest the topic: Innovations in support for people with MS: from nursing care to neuropsychological rehabilitation. Two complementary speakers are proposed:

- * **Ruth Strosshl** (United Kingdom), an MS nurse with extensive experience in MS care and research
- * **Marnina B. Stimmel** (USA), who has led a pilot randomised controlled trial on a neuropsychologically-based intervention with increased follow-up support for employed women with MS.

This combination of clinical and research perspectives will encourage a lively discussion on how to best design and deliver interventions that address the multifaceted needs of people living with MS.



Scan here for more information or visit:
www.rehabinms.org/mood-cognition



SIG Report Communication & Swallowing



Leena Heikkola,
Chair, Finland



Hans Bogaardt,
Co-chair, Australia

➤ ABOUT US

The Special Interest Group (SIG) Communication & Swallowing brings together speech and language therapists (SLTs) from across Europe, all with a shared commitment to advancing care for people with Multiple Sclerosis (PwMS).

The group focuses on the exchange of clinical experiences, development of shared assessment tools, and collaborative research on communication and swallowing disorders in Multiple Sclerosis. Through yearly face-to-face meetings and regular virtual contact, members foster a vibrant international network.

➤ ONGOING PROJECTS

Currently, there is a project on validating a tool in Finnish to assess pragmatic abilities in MS lead by SIG co-chair Heikkola. The Test for Assessment of Pragmatic Abilities (APACS) was originally developed by Arcara and Valentini (2016) for assessing pragmatic abilities and its cognitive substrate in Italian. The tool has been and is being translated into multiple languages.

➤ FUTURE PLANS

The SIG Communication and Swallowing has plans to organize yearly visits to different MS centers in Europe to learn about different assessment and rehabilitation tools used in the different centers.

➤ SIG MEETING & IN-BETWEEN MEETING

No meetings were organized in 2024.



Scan here for more information or visit:
www.rehabinms.org/communication-swallowing



Our Activities

The Executive Board of RiMS (Rehabilitation in Multiple Sclerosis) has developed a wide range of activities that foster learning, innovation, and collaboration in the field of MS rehabilitation. These initiatives are designed to strengthen professional expertise, encourage knowledge exchange, and ultimately improve the quality of life of people living with Multiple Sclerosis and their caregivers.

Through live education such as annual conferences, workshops, and teaching courses, RiMS provides unique opportunities for professionals to come together, share experiences, and explore the latest developments in rehabilitation. Complementing these events, a comprehensive e-learning programme offers webinars, e-courses, podcasts, and recorded sessions that make expert knowledge accessible to members across the globe. RiMS also invests in research and professional development through its dedicated Grant Programme, supporting projects that advance rehabilitation science, and a Fellowship Programme, enabling young professionals to gain international experience and expertise. In addition, the society takes an active role in European collaborative projects, working with partners and Special Interest Groups to develop innovative approaches and ensure that research translates into practice.

By combining education, research support, and collaborative initiatives, RiMS creates a dynamic environment where clinicians, researchers, and allied professionals can grow, connect, and contribute to meaningful progress in MS rehabilitation.

- WEBINARS
- ANNUAL CONFERENCE
- GRANT PROGRAMME
- FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME
- PROJECTS & COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH



Scan here for more information about
Our Latest Activities and Projects

RiMS Webinars

RiMS hosts an annual series of webinars aimed at advancing MS rehabilitation education, providing all members and students with access to expert insights and the chance to engage with prominent voices in the field. Recordings are subsequently accessible on the e-learning RiMS platform for members.

» WEBINAR

Application of fNIRS to Evaluate Brain Function in Persons with MS

MAR. 24, 2024

Functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) is an emerging, non-invasive technique for assessing brain function. This webinar explores its application in MS research and rehabilitation.

SPEAKER:

* **Kim-Charline Broscheid,**
Dr. rer. medic., Research Assistant Universität Hamburg (UHH), Germany

» WEBINAR

Being an International PhD Student Working with Rehabilitation in MS

MAY 06, 2024

What does it mean to be an early career researcher in MS rehabilitation? This webinar offers insights into two ongoing PhD projects, exploring mechanisms like the kynurenine pathway and walking fatigability in people with MS—from two international perspectives.

SPEAKERS:

* **Marie Kupjetz,**
PhD Student, TU Dortmund University, Institute of Sport and Sport Science, Research Group "Performance and Health (Sports Medicine)", Dortmund, Germany

* **Felipe Balistieri Santinelli,**
PhD Student, REVAL Rehabilitation Research Centre, Faculty of Rehabilitation Sciences, Hasselt University, Belgium & Universitair MS Centrum (UMSC), Belgium

» WEBINAR

Physical activity in persons with Multiple Sclerosis

SEP. 02, 2024

SPEAKERS:

* **Eilidh MacDonald,**
PhD student digital health, BSc biomedical sciences, University of the West of Scotland, Scotland

* **Therese M Andersen,**
Research Assistant, MSc Sports Science Exercise Biology, Dept. of Public Health, Aarhus University, Denmark

» WEBINAR

The Role of Patient-Reported Outcomes (PROs) in MS Care

OCT. 28, 2024

This session explores the integration of patient-reported outcomes (PROs) into the clinical care of people with MS, with highlights from the international PROMS initiative and psychometric insights into PRO tools.

SPEAKERS:

* **Giampaolo Brichetto,**
Clinical Director at the Italian MS Society & President of RiMS Italian MS Society, Italy

* **Jeremy Hobart,**
Professor of Clinical Neurology and Health Measurement University of Plymouth, United Kingdom

Annual RiMS Conference

29th Annual RiMS Conference

Hasselt University, Belgium
June 27-29, 2024

» SCIENTIFIC SESSIONS

The topic of last year's edition was Empowerment & Inclusivity where we focused on the following areas:

- * **Neuroplasticity and Motor Learning in MS Rehabilitation**
- * **Advancements in Digital Health and Telerehabilitation**
- * **Cognitive and Psychological Aspects of MS Management**
- * **Innovative Strategies in Fatigue and Mobility Treatment**
- * **Integration of Evidence-Based Practice into Clinical Settings**

» SIG MEETINGS

Several Special Interest Groups met during the Annual Conference in Hasselt. More information can be found in the SIG Reports included in this Activity Report.

» RiMS PRIZE WINNERS

The RiMS Poster and Platform Presentation Awards are granted each year during the Joint ECTRIMS–RiMS Annual Conference to celebrate outstanding contributions from emerging researchers in Multiple Sclerosis rehabilitation. These awards are part of RiMS' commitment to encouraging scientific excellence and visibility among early-career professionals.

In 2024, the winners were:

Best Oral Presentation

* **Susan Seddiq Zai** (DE)

Best Poster Award

* **Josephine Steenberg** (DK)

Congratulations to the winners!

» GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly was held at the end of the conference on Friday 28th June 2024. The RiMS members of 2024 approved the financial report.



Scan here for more information about
The Annual RiMS Conference 2025

RiMS Grant Programme



Apply today

The RiGra (RiMS Grant Programme) was established to promote excellence and collaboration in Multiple Sclerosis (MS) rehabilitation across Europe. The programme supports projects that aim to advance best practices and research in MS care, encouraging cross-border collaboration and innovation among members of the RiMS community.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- * Applicants must be a RiMS member (either individual or centre-level) at the time of submission.
- * Submissions must be made electronically (via email) before the announced deadline.

JUDGING CRITERIA

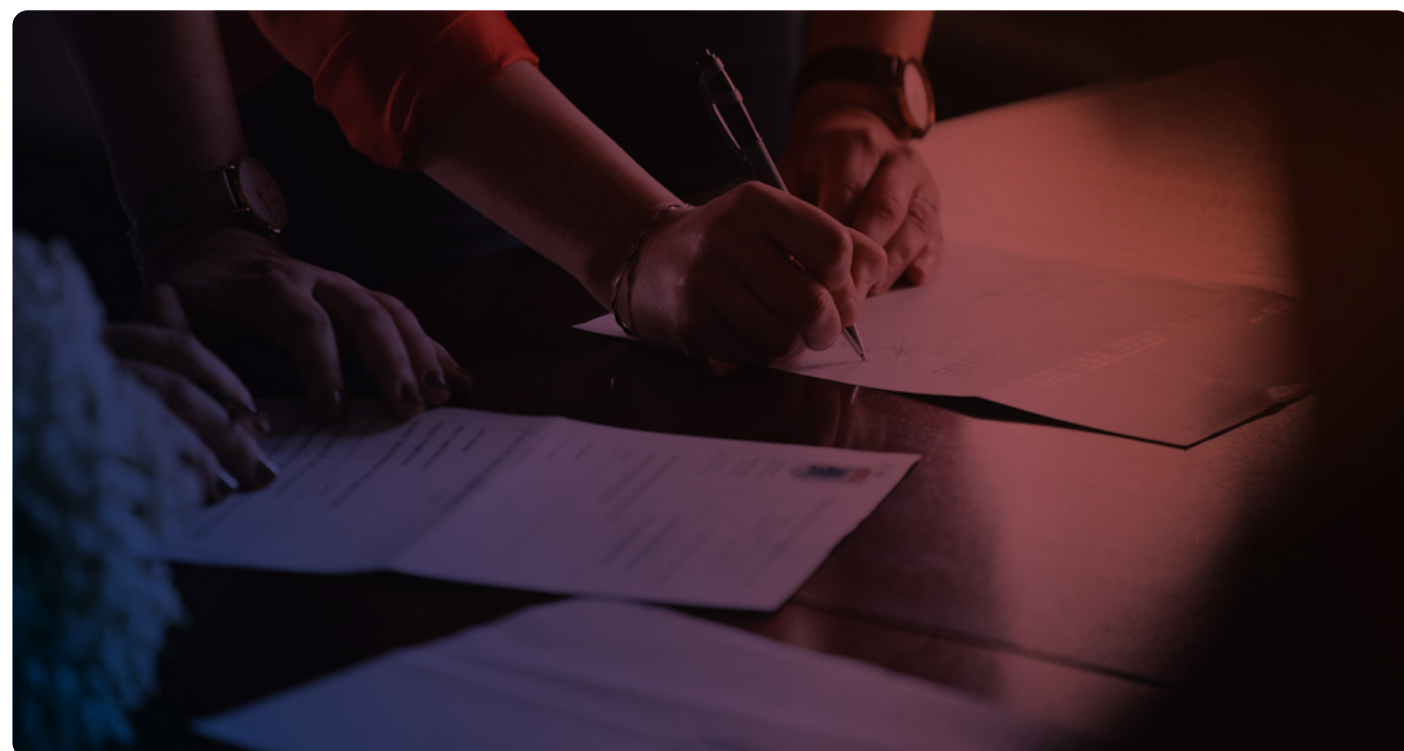
- * Clear feasibility and achievable outcomes with the funding provided.
- * High relevance to RiMS' mission and objectives.
- * Detailed and transparent budget.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- * Applicants under 36 years old (early-career researchers or young clinicians).
- * Projects involving multi-centre and international collaboration, especially between at least two RiMS centres in different countries.

DEADLINES

Application details can be found on the RiMS website at the section with Career Support.



RiMS Fellowship Programme



Apply today

This programme is dedicated to young European professionals, preferably non-doctors, who are working in the field of Multiple Sclerosis rehabilitation. Each year, RiMS supports up to four fellowships, each lasting one week, with €1,000 in reimbursement per fellowship.

The goal of the Fellowship Programme is to promote a multidisciplinary approach to MS rehabilitation and foster international exchange of knowledge and experience among young professionals working at RiMS Member Centres.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- * Applicants must be a RiMS member (either individual or centre-level) at the time of submission.
- * Submissions must be made electronically (via email) before the announced deadline.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- * Applicants under 36 years old (early-career researchers or young clinicians).
- * Projects involving multi-centre and international collaboration, especially between at least two RiMS centres in different countries.

JUDGING CRITERIA

- * Clear feasibility and achievable outcomes with the funding provided.
- * High relevance to RiMS' mission and objectives.
- * Detailed and transparent budget.

DEADLINES

Application details can be found on the RiMS website at the section with Career Support.

THE RiMS 2024 FELLOWSHIPS

- * **Teresa L'Abbate** (IT) visited Servizio Riabilitazione AISM Liguria, Genoa, Italy
- * **Julie Redaway** (BE) and **Aurélië Crèvecoeur** (BE) visited Centre d'Esclerosi Múltiple de Catalunya (Cemcat), Barcelona



Project PROMS Global Initiative



PROMS is a multi-stakeholder initiative, including people affected by multiple sclerosis, researchers, clinicians, pharmaceutical companies, and MSIF's (MS International Federation) member organisations as well as many other types of experts – to do together what we cannot achieve individually.

The initiative is organized into 4 working groups (WG).

RIMS is particularly involved in WG1 on research, development and validation that seeks to identify and validate the most important functional domains in Patient Reported Outcomes (PROs) for people with MS via participatory methods and in WG3 on e-health.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024:

The presentation of the preliminary results of a survey, conducted with 5,218 participants from 69 countries at ECTRIMS 2024. The e-poster was titled: Frequency and impact of symptoms experienced by people living with multiple sclerosis. Scan the QR code to access the results.

The presentation of the preliminary results of a survey, conducted with 5,218 participants from 69 countries at ECTRIMS 2024.

The e-poster was titled: Frequency and impact of symptoms experienced by people living with multiple sclerosis.

* PROMs and Patient-Centred Insights:

A comprehensive analysis of how PROMs are redefining the state-of-the-art in personalized care through the utilization of real-world data, emphasising pivotal initiatives such as MULTI-ACT and BRAINTEASER.

* Empirical Research and Findings:

Presentation of novel studies on gait, balance, and cognitive PROMs, providing significant evidence of their utility in detecting prodromal signs of disease progression and identifying underexplored patient needs.

* Challenges and Future Directions:

A thorough discussion on the evolving landscape of patient-reported outcomes in clinical practice, including regulatory considerations and the strategic use of patient-generated data.



Scan here to access
the results of the PROMS Survey



Funding

In 2024, RiMS has continued to benefit from the unconditional support coming from the industry. This funding enabled RiMS to further develop its network of rehabilitation experts through jointly executed cross border projects and research.

RiMS acknowledges the importance of this support and confirms its strict following of EFPIA's Code of Ethics.

OUR FUNDERS

sanofi

Sanofi is a global healthcare leader dedicated to transforming the practice of medicine through pioneering research, development, and manufacturing of treatments across a broad spectrum of diseases. In the area of multiple sclerosis, Sanofi invests significantly in innovative therapies and patient-centered solutions, helping to support educational initiatives and collaborative projects that advance MS care and knowledge.

Roche

Roche is a global pioneer in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics, committed to advancing science to improve people's lives. With a strong focus on neurology and MS, Roche supports research, education, and community activities that contribute to better patient outcomes. Their sustained engagement helps drive innovation and awareness initiatives within the MS field.

Coloplast

Coloplast develops innovative medical products and services that make life easier for people with intimate healthcare needs. With expertise spanning continence care and other areas often impacting people with MS, Coloplast actively supports education, rehabilitation, and quality of life initiatives—helping enable a holistic approach to MS care.

ECTRIMS
EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR TREATMENT AND RESEARCH IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Beyond being the largest professional organization in MS research and care, ECTRIMS actively supports educational initiatives, training grants, and scientific collaborations through sponsorships and partnerships. Their financial support plays a crucial role in enabling international meetings, workshops, and fellowships that advance MS knowledge and expertise.

EXHIBITORS OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN HASSELT 2024



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All RiMS operations are managed by LAUREA, a Belgian agency specializing in medical and scientific learning, communication and advocacy. LAUREA develops and implements tailored strategies for organizations, associations and institutions, bringing together expertise in healthcare communication, scientific content, digital learning and live education.

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RiMS Memberships & Accounts

To stay up to date with the latest news, educational content, and professional opportunities in the field of Multiple Sclerosis rehabilitation, we invite you to become part of the RiMS network.

There are three ways to get involved, each offering different levels of engagement: a Free Account, a Free Membership, or a Paying Membership. See the details below and choose the one that best fits your needs and professional journey.

INDIVIDUAL AND EARLY CAREER MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- * **Enjoy discounted registration fees** for the RiMS Annual Conference, RiMS Workshop and Special Interest Group meetings
- * **Participate** in up to two Special Interest Groups (SIGs) — contribute to projects, take on leadership roles, and access SIG-specific content.
- * **Apply** for dedicated grants, fellowships, and other RiMS-funded initiatives.
- * **Access** exclusive online member-only resources and e-learning materials and join Paying Members Only online teaching courses.
- * **Connect and collaborate** with MS professionals across Europe through our growing network.
- * **Have voting right** in the RiMS General Assembly, allowing them to co-decide on the strategic direction of RiMS and be able to **be a candidate** for SIG leadership or RiMS leadership roles.

CENTRE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- * **Gain visibility** by joining our Centre Member Network. Your institution will be published on our website and recognized across our internal and external communications as a RiMS Centre Member.
- * Receive an invite for the **annual RiMS Rehab Centre leadership meeting** organised in the margin of ECTRIMS or the RiMS Annual Conference.
- * The Centre Membership Manager (the person signing-up for the Member Centre Membership), **receives our e-newsletters and e-announcements.**
- * Be invited to **join multi-centre research projects** initiated by RiMS (additional eligibility criteria may apply for the specific research project).
- * Can **join information dissemination activities** initiated by RiMS (eg. to recruit patients, on research outcomes, ...).
- * Grant **Individual Membership by affiliation to all professionals from your organisation**, allowing them to access the full range of Individual Membership benefits.
- * 6 Individual Members by affiliation have **voting right in the RiMS General Assembly**, allowing them to co-decide on the strategic direction of RiMS.

Membership Types & Fees



FREE MEMBERSHIP

€0/year*

FOR WHOM?

Students in a healthcare related curriculum and professionals active in multiple sclerosis research, treatment, education, or rehabilitation



EARLY CAREER MEMBERSHIP

€45/year*

FOR WHOM?

Students in a healthcare related curriculum
Professionals in healthcare within the first 5 years of work



INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

€145/year*

FOR WHOM?

Professionals active in multiple sclerosis research, treatment, education, or rehabilitation



CENTRE MEMBERSHIP

€490/year*

FOR WHOM?

Multiple Sclerosis and rehabilitation centres
Research groups or healthcare institutions with 6+ professionals
Centres looking to engage in RiMS leadership and collaboration

*RiMS Memberships are valid for 12 months as from date of subscription. You will be notified when your Membership is up for renewal. Memberships are not automatically renewed. 0% VAT is applied to the Membership fee based on Directive 2006/112/EC – implemented in Article 44 § 2, 11 ° of the Belgian VAT Code.

*You have a 14-day cooling-off period from the date of purchase/subscription, during which you can cancel for a full refund without providing a reason. After that period, paid Membership fees cannot be refunded. Memberships are following the rules described in the RiMS Bylaws section II that can be consulted on this page.



More information about our membership accounts:
www.rehabinms.org/membership-accounts



Live Education



Special Interest
Groups



Research and
Career Support



E-Learning
Materials