

Challenges and Improvement Strategies in Multiple Sclerosis Care: A Qualitative Study among Neurologists in Iraq

Ali Mahdi Mohammed, BPharm*** Samer Imad Mohammed, PhD* Zuhair Abdul-Ghafoor AL-Johar***

ABSTRACT

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is associated with considerable physical, psychological, and social burdens. In low- and middle-income settings such as Iraq, lack of proper medical infrastructure, delay in diagnosis, and service delivery complicate the best possible management of the disease. The aim of the qualitative study was to get the perceptions of Iraqi neurologists regarding the main challenges and the systemic gaps in MS care and to describe the ways of how the MS patient outcomes and health system performance can be improved. Qualitative research was conducted in the main MS referral center in Iraq at Baghdad Teaching Hospital through semi-structured interviews with the neurologists. Thematic analysis of the transcripts of the interviews was conducted in order to reveal the main challenges, system-level gaps, and suggested solutions. Fifteen neurologists participated in the study. The most frequent restrictions of the daily functioning and active disease management were fatigue, impairment of mobility, and mental health problems. The factors that contributed to systemic failures were access to specialized MS care, lack of multidisciplinary collaboration, lack of educational programmes, poor social integration, and lack of national MS guidelines. This study indicates that Iraqi neurologists encountered significant problems in MS care, including debilitating symptom, difficulty with medication adherence and crucial deficiency in healthcare system. However, this obstacle can be overcome with tailored intervention such as formulating national MS guidelines, instituting multidisciplinary treatment team and creating supervised digital platform or patient education.

Keywords: Challenges, Multiple sclerosis, Management, Mitigation strategies, Neurologists.

Bahrain Med Bull 2026; 48 (3): 3479 - 3486

* Department of Clinical Pharmacy
College of Pharmacy, University of Baghdad
Baghdad, Iraq.

** Ministry of Health, Baghdad Alrusafa Health Directorate
Baghdad, Iraq.
Email: ali.mul2200@copharm.uobaghdad.edu.iq

*** Medical Board, Iraqi Board Neural,
Department of Medical, College of Medicine
University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq.