



FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY OF RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS PATIENTS FROM SOUTHEAST TEXAS

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Introduction: Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) is a sensory-motor condition of uncertain etiology with a 5 to 15% prevalence in the general population that may be associated with family history, pregnancy, female gender, iron deficiency and renal insufficiency among other conditions. Currently there is not a single test for diagnosis. The main diagnostic criteria (1) are: 1) A desire to move the extremities often associated with unpleasant sensation in the legs, 2) symptoms are worse or present during rest and partially relieved by activity, 3) motor restlessness and 4) nocturnal worsening. Associated with the diagnostic criteria, there is a validated scale that can measure the severity of symptoms in patients with RLS (2).

We only found two studies in the literature addressing this topic reporting frequency of RLS in MS patients between 32-37.5%. We did not find a study related to severity of symptoms in these patients which used the severity scale described above.

Objectives: To assess the frequency and severity of MS patients with RLS confirmed according to the diagnostic criteria and severity scale.

Materials and Methods: Prospective study of 206 consecutive patients seen at the Maxine Mesinger MS Clinic and having MS diagnosis according to the Revised McDonald criteria. The patients answered 4 questions related to the diagnostic criteria for RLS. If the questions were affirmatively answered and RLS confirmed, symptom severity was measured using the RLS severity scale.

Results: 206 subjects participated in the study. From this population, 68 (33%) met the criteria for RLS (fig. 1); 75% were women and 25% men (fig. 2); 39% of women with MS met the criteria for RLS compared to 27% of men (fig. 2). 80% of RLS patients had the Relapsing-Remitting form of MS

Fig. 1. Frequency of RLS in our MS population.

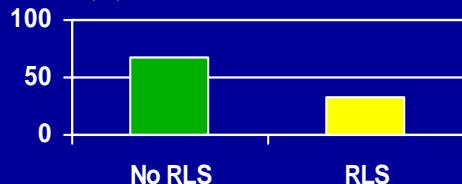
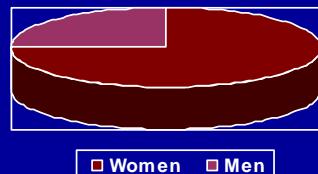


Fig. 2. Gender of subjects with MS and RLS



20% of the subjects with RLS had documented Anemia. All the hypothyroid subjects (7% of RLS patients) were receiving thyroid supplementation, only one patient had diabetes and none were pregnant.

Fig. 3. Frequency of RLS according to gender.



Finally, regarding severity of the disease, 17% had very severe, 42% severe, 37% moderate and only 4% mild symptoms (fig. 4)



Conclusions: We found a relatively high proportion of MS patients that had RLS in comparison with the general population. The disease also seems to be more severe in this group of patients. As with many other associated symptoms in MS, we need to be aware of RLS and proceed with appropriate management if needed.

References:

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