

1: Neuroepidemiology. 2009 Feb 27;32(4):287-293. [Epub ahead of print]

### Prevalence and Incidence of Multiple Sclerosis in Panama (2000-2005).

Gracia F, Castillo LC, Benzadón A, Larreategui M, Villareal F, Triana E, Arango AC, Lee D, Pascale JM, Gomez E, Armien B.

Hospital Santo Tomás, Panamá, Panamá

**Background:** The first cases of multiple sclerosis (MS) in Panama were notified in the 1980s and it was considered a low-risk region for this disease. Between 2000 and 2005, a prevalence study was conducted to characterize MS in Panama. **Methods:** An instrument was developed to gather information from clinical files and interviews with previous informed consent. The diagnosis was confirmed by neurologists applying the Poser and McDonald criteria as per the inclusion period. **Results:** 178 patients from the public and private health sectors were captured between 1970 and 2005. The prevalence rate was 5.24/100,000 inhabitants, and the incidence was between 0.28 and 0.61/100,000 inhabitants. The disease was predominant among women, the mean age +/- SD being 34.76 +/- 10.909 years (1st crisis), and the average number of crises was 2.88. The most common clinical findings were motor, optic neuritis, sensitive and cerebellous. 52.4% presented monosymptomatic manifestations, 71.6% were clinically defined according to Poser's criteria and 55.6% had MS according to McDonald's criteria. 77.8% had their debut with the relapsing-remitting type and presented an Expanded Disability Status Scale score of 2.7 after the first crisis. **Conclusion:** MS is in Panama a neurological pathology with a low prevalence and the results of this investigation improved early treatment and diagnosis of this disease. Copyright © 2009 S. Karger AG, Basel.

PMID: 19246933 [PubMed - as supplied by publisher]