



DIVISION OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AND NEUROIMMUNOLOGY NEWSLETTER



Season's Greetings to you from the Northwestern Medicine's Division of Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroimmunology.

It has been a busy year and holiday season so far and on behalf of all of the faculty, staff, and students, I want to wish you a very happy holiday. We hope your 2026 is filled with much happiness and wellness.

I joined the group in September 2025 and have personally loved seeing Chicago transform for the winter. Thank you for being part of our community. We hope this new newsletter provides updates on the Division, notes from its members, and upcoming research studies open to you, as well as wider developments in the field of MS and Neuroimmunology from recent clinical trials, medication approvals, and resources.



Farrah Mateen, MD, PhD
Charles L. Mix Professor of Neurology
Chief, Division of Multiple Sclerosis
and Neuroimmunology

Who we are:

At the Neuroimmunology and Multiple Sclerosis Division at the Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine, we're dedicated to advancing diagnosis, treatment, and overall research in multiple sclerosis and other inflammatory disorders of the brain and spinal cord through compassionate clinical support, education, and collaborative partnerships with our patients and community.

Our team works across clinical care, infusion services, and research to ensure every patient receives comprehensive, high-quality treatment.

Meet our research coordinators:



Justin Hill, BA

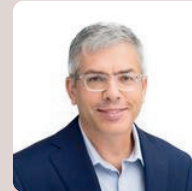


Nomin
Enkhtsetseg, BA



Caroline
Gebczak, BS

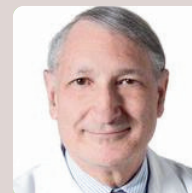
Brought to you by our faculty:



Benayahu
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Assistant Professor, Neurology



Brian J
Popko, PhD
Professor, Neurology



Bruce A
Cohen, MD
Professor, Neurology



Carolyn J
Bevan, MD, MS
Adjunct Lecturer, Neurology



Dan Tong Jia, MD
Assistant Professor, Neurology



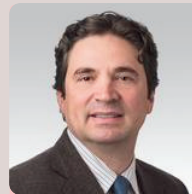
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Kavita
P Thakkar, MD
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Roumen
D Balabanov, MD
Associate Professor, Neurology

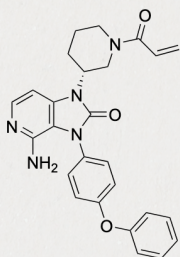


Shailee S Shah, MD
Clinical Assistant Professor,
Neurology





What's new in MS?



Research Update:

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is anticipated to review the new drug, Tolebrutinib, for multiple sclerosis on December 28, 2025. The decision has not been made on whether the drug is approved yet in the USA.

What is Tolebrutinib?

Tolebrutinib is a new drug made by the company Sanofi. It belongs to a class of drugs called the Bruton's tyrosine kinase inhibitors. This drug class has been used in other diseases but never in multiple sclerosis before. It is a pill taken once per day.

Who may benefit from Tolebrutinib?

Tolebrutinib was studied in large clinical trials for patients with non-relapsing secondary progressive MS (versus placebo) and also in relapsing MS (versus teriflunomide (Aubagio)). Tolebrutinib is of particular interest in non-relapsing secondary progressive MS since there are fewer treatment options available for this type of MS.

What research was done?

The most important reports were the phase III large, randomized clinical trials. In secondary progressive MS, >1100 patients were studied. They found less disability in patients on Tolebrutinib at 6 months.

In relapsing MS, Tolebrutinib did better, but similarly to teriflunomide.

No comparisons to other MS drugs, such as B-cell depleting drugs, have been done yet on Tolebrutinib.

What are the safety considerations?

The medication is new. In the trials, elevated liver enzymes were an important finding in a subset of patients. Also, in the relapsing trial, there was a higher proportion of patients with minor bleeding in the Tolebrutinib-treated group.

Please talk to your doctor if you have questions on any new medication updates.

References:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40202623/>
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40202696/>

JOIN OUR STUDIES!

Investigating the Impact of Sex Hormones on Corticospinal Excitability, Motor Learning, and Fatigue in Females with Multiple Sclerosis

A new study is exploring how strength and motor function fluctuate across the menstrual cycle in people with MS. We also have an ongoing study on hormone therapies and menopause in MS.

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People with Multiple Sclerosis treated with Ocrelizumab and Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 agonist

The study will examine people living with MS who are being treated with Ocrevus and are either currently taking or planning to start a GLP-1 medication. The study aims to better understand how GLP-1 medications may affect MS symptoms, energy, walking ability, and overall quality of life.

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Ublituximab (Briumvi) for Early forms of Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis

The goal of this study is to understand the safety and tolerability of Ublituximab (Briumvi) in people with early relapsing MS. We also want to measure changes in a blood biomarker (neurofilament light chain) before and after treatment.

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Randomized, Blinded Discontinuation Trial of Ocrelizumab in Early Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis

This study looks at whether people with early relapsing MS can continue to stay in remission after stopping Ocrelizumab following treatment. Participants are closely monitored with MRIs, blood tests, and symptom measures to see whether stopping treatment is as safe and effective as continuing.

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Fellow Spotlight



Current Neuroimmunology and Multiple Sclerosis fellow for the academic year 2025-2026



"...you have the opportunity to form lifelong connections with patients." —Dr. Kopinsky

Hannah Kopinsky, MD

What inspired you to pursue MS as your subspecialty?

"Through medical school I was always fascinated by diseases that interfaced neurology and the immune system. This interest carried into my neurology residency training and I found during my rotations that I loved working with patients with MS and related disorders because you have the opportunity to form lifelong connections with patients and guide them through some of their most stressful experiences."

What's something about your work that you find fulfilling?

"...reading about the mechanisms of disease, new areas of research, and by getting to know the patients I work with (especially when I am lucky enough to see them more than once!)."

What are you currently focusing on in clinic?

"Currently in clinic, I am focusing on applying clinical trial data to conversations that I have with patients."

What's one thing you wish more patients knew about MS or the care for MS?

"MS can look different for everyone in regards to their symptoms and response to treatment. With that, it is important to not compare progress to your neighbors and to also not be discouraged if something isn't working right away."

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:



<https://www.neurology.northwestern.edu/divisions/ms-neuroimmunology/index.html>



MS Patient and Family Symposium 2025

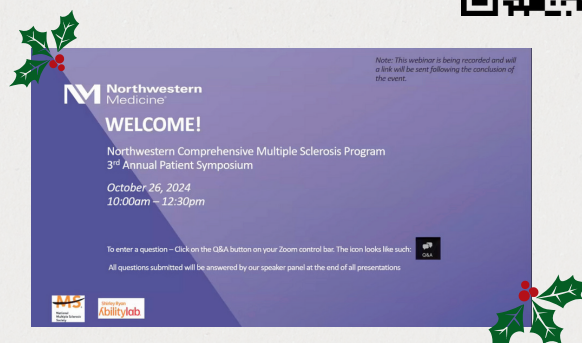
December 13, 2025 | 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Join us for our annual MS Virtual Patient and Family Symposium, where leading experts will discuss advances in the research and management of MS. People with MS, their family members and caregivers are welcome to attend.

There is no cost to attend, but registration is required. On the day of the event, you will get an email with a link to join the session.

Link to register:

<https://tinyurl.com/y8au5spv>



Watch our past MS Virtual Patient and Family Symposium from 2024 here:
<https://youtu.be/3ZFhM5BDoUs>

Support Our Work

Your generosity helps us accelerate discoveries, expand clinical trials, and improve MS care. You can support MS research at our center here:

<https://feinberg.nu/MSResearch>

"How to use the QR code:"

1. Open camera
2. Point at code
3. Tap the link that pops up



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*Happy
Holidays!*