

## **The Canadian Collaborative Project on Genetic Susceptibility to Multiple Sclerosis (CCPGSMS)**

The Canadian Collaborative Project on Genetic Susceptibility to Multiple Sclerosis (CCPGSMS) is a Canada wide study involving 15 Multiple Sclerosis (MS) clinics, and more than 30,000 MS patients and their family members. The primary goal of the study is to direct efforts to pinpoint the gene or genes, involved in the onset and development of MS, while also intending to determine what non-genetic factors play a role, if any, in the development of MS.

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Participants can decide to take part, or not, at any time. Patients with a confirmed diagnosis of MS are asked if they would like to participate within the scope of the study. A clinical research staff member interviews those patients who decide to participate. Questions regarding the patient's family composition, birthplace, medical history, are asked to determine the degree to which further information may be requested. The patient's mother, spouse, mother-in-law and extended family members may be asked to participate as well, to provide a more detailed genetic profile.

Patients who have more than one family member in addition to themselves affected with MS, or have living grandparents may be asked to participate in the genetic portion of the study. This may include the request to collect blood samples from the patient, and from the patient's immediate family members and/or grandparents (e.g., parents, siblings etc). Blood samples can be collected from anywhere in Canada and the United States. The cost of collecting the samples is covered by the study.

To date we have completed Phase 4 of the CCPGSMS. Below are some of the findings:

- A familial susceptibility was identified
- Incidence of the disease was increasing
- There is a definite gender difference
- A correlation between genes and environment was seen

In Phase 5, we will be expanding upon the findings from Phase 4, and will be looking at the following:

1. When and on whom does the environment act?
2. What are the familial trends seen previously?

3. What is the increased incidence of MS in Canada?
4. Identifying the susceptibility to offspring born from the mating between susceptible and resistant populations.

Currently we are contacting patients born in 1975 or later, and who have not already participated in the CCPGSMS study. We are also interested in families who have more than one family member affected with MS, and have not already participated in the CCPGSMS study.

If you would like to participate or have any questions regarding the CCPGSMS, please contact:

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