

Auto transplant helps some people with multiple sclerosis

What were researchers trying to learn?

Researchers wanted to learn how well people with multiple sclerosis (MS) do for several years after autologous (auto) transplant. Auto transplant uses the patient's own blood-forming cells to replace the unhealthy ones.

In MS, the body's immune system attacks the central nervous system (CNS). The CNS includes the brain, spinal cord, and eye (optic) nerves. Medicines and rehabilitation can treat MS. But sometimes MS is aggressive and doesn't get better with these treatments. Auto transplant may treat aggressive MS.

Researchers studied 281 people with MS who had auto transplant between 1995 and 2006.

What did they find?

More than 90% of people (9 out of 10) were alive 5 years after auto transplant for MS. More than 80% (8 out of 10) were alive 10 years after transplant.

MS usually gets worse as time goes on. But for almost half of people in this study, the MS didn't get worse for 5 years after transplant.

People who did better after auto transplant for MS:

- Were younger.
- Had a relapsing form of MS. This means sometimes their MS symptoms got better before getting worse again.
- Had fewer other treatments before transplant.
- Were healthier before transplant.

Important Point:

For almost half of people who got auto transplant, their MS didn't get worse for 5 years after transplant.

Why is this important?

This is the largest study of auto transplant for MS. It included the most people. And it included data for the longest time after transplant. Transplant doctors now know how people may do for 5 years after auto transplant for MS. This can help people decide whether to get a transplant or choose a different treatment.

What else should I keep in mind about this study?

The results of research studies are always limited in what they can and can't tell you. With this study, one drawback is that the people were very different. They were different ages, lived in 13 different countries, and had different treatments before transplant. Also, some of the people in this study got transplant more than 20 years ago. People with MS do better now than they did in 1995. This can make it hard to know what the results mean for you.

Questions to ask your doctor

If you are considering transplant for MS, you may want to ask:

- Do you recommend transplant for me?
- How long do patients my age and with my form of MS usually live?
- Is there anything about my health that may help me live longer?
- When is the best time for me to have a transplant?

Learn more about

- [This research study](#)
- [Blood and marrow transplant](#)

Source

Muraro PA, Pasquini M, Atkins HL, et al. Long-term outcomes after autologous hematopoietic stem cell transplantation for multiple sclerosis. *JAMA Neurology*. 2017 Apr 1; 74(4):459-469. doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2016.5867. Epub 2017 Feb 20.

About this research summary

Ground-breaking research into blood and marrow transplant is happening every day. That research is having a significant impact on the survival and quality of life of thousands of transplant patients. But the research is written by scientists for scientists. By providing research news in an easy-to-understand way, patients, caregivers, and families have access to useful information that can help them make treatment decisions.

This information is provided on behalf of the Consumer Advocacy Committee of the CIBMTR[®] (Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research[®]). The CIBMTR is a research collaboration between the National Marrow Donor Program[®]/Be The Match[®] and the Medical College of Wisconsin.