

## Novel Therapies for Multiple Sclerosis available but not affordable

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In recent times, a wide range of innovative therapies have become available for patients suffering from this debilitating condition. These new therapies can target the different types of Multiple Sclerosis (MS). For example, Avonex (interferon beta 1a) is an injectable in a prefilled syringe indicated for relapsing, remitting form of MS. This year, there was a new device for easier administration of Avonex called the Avonex Pen to help patients be more independent in administering therapy thus improving their adherence.

Dr Joy Desai, Consultant Neurologist, Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre said, "Today, progress in drug research has made it possible to manage MS by up to 60%. Unfortunately, most patients are unable to benefit from this development as they cannot afford these therapies. Also, insurance companies have been reluctant to cover this life long disease under medical coverage."

Doctors feel that it is crucial for them to be constantly updated about the availability of new therapies. Those who were well updated about new medicines were more likely to be taking the appropriate treatments.

As per Dr P P Ashok, Consultant Neurologist and Head, Division of Neurology, Hinduja Hospital "Novel treatment therapies are not uniformly accessible across the country. It is very essential for doctors and patients to have an increased awareness about the new therapies."