◆ **Drugs often dominate Multiple Sclerosis (MS) research** focus & resources, **but other themes** also rank highly as priorities **for patients with MS and carers**: prognosis of disability, multidisciplinary social and health care, psychological health and exercise.

◆ Cochrane reviews should be prioritized towards the most urgent, pressing health challenges worldwide to drive improvements in global health and wellbeing.

◆ **Involving consumers in the priority-setting process helps to identify relevant topics**

Improving alignment between research priorities and needs of people with multiple sclerosis: A worldwide, multi-stakeholder priority setting exercise

Background: In 2020, the Cochrane Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Review Group, with the Cochrane Neurological Sciences Field, launched a global priority-setting exercise to elicit the research priorities of people with MS (PwMS), carers, advocates and healthcare professionals. **Prioritizing pressing questions** could ensure that future **systematic reviews are as useful as possible for the people who need them.**

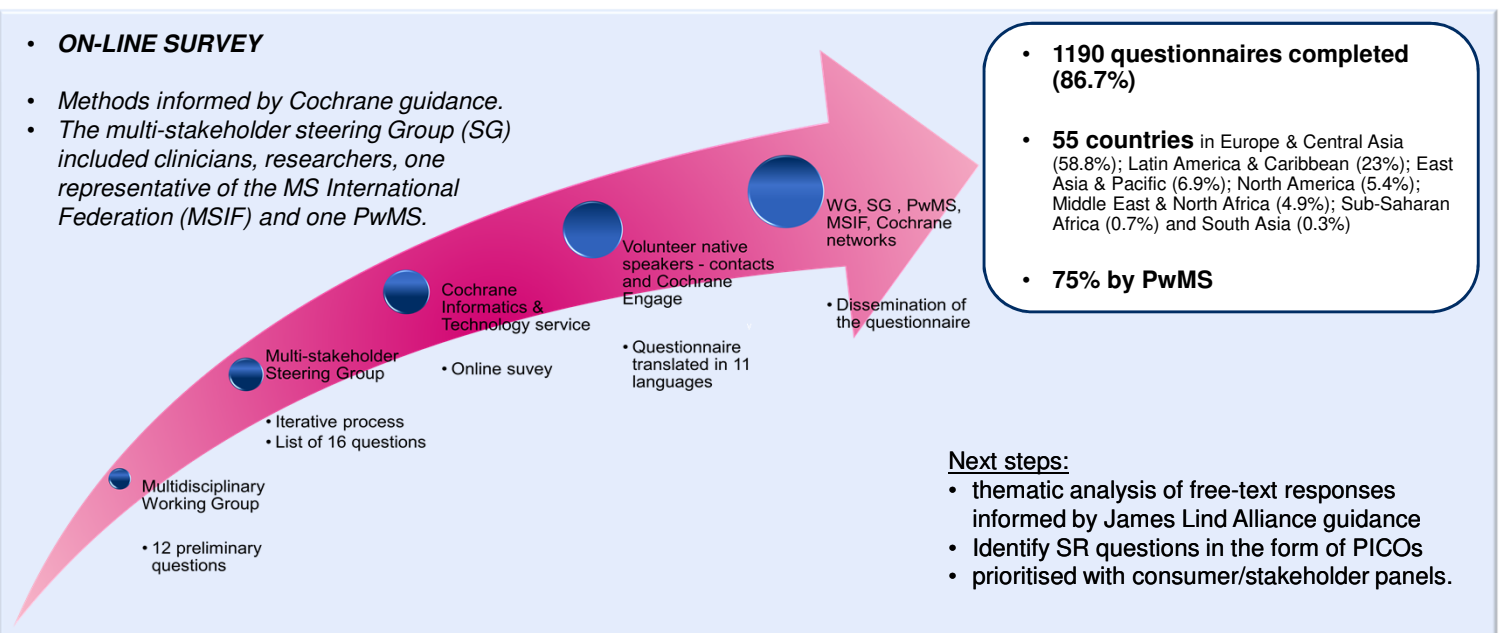## Results Table 1. Five top priority-ranked topics by 1,190 respondents

Question	Respondents who chose the question as top priority
Does MRI help predict disability worsening of PwMS?	19.9%
What are the benefits and harms of treating PwMS with one disease-modifying drug compared to another?	19.3%
Does multisciplinary care by teams of different social and health professionals improve health outcomes and experiences for PwMS?	11.9%
Does psychological health affect disease progression in PwMS?	9.2%
What are the benefits and harms of exercise for PwMS?	7.2%

- **Large sample**

- **Highly representative of PwMS**

- Free-text questions allowing respondents to:
  - elaborate on their choices
  - propose entirely new research topics

- Currently ongoing:
  - **systematic reviews (SR) based on these titles** are in various stages of development.

Methods

- **ON-LINE SURVEY**

- *Methods informed by Cochrane guidance.*
- *The multi-stakeholder steering Group (SG) included clinicians, researchers, one representative of the MS International Federation (MSIF) and one PwMS.*

Multidisciplinary Working Group
• 12 preliminary questions

Multi-stakeholder Steering Group
• Iterative process
• List of 16 questions

Cochrane Informatics & Technology service
• Online suvey

Volunteer native speakers - contacts and Cochrane Engage
• Questionnaire translated in 11 languages

WG, SG , PwMS, MSIF, Cochrane networks
• Dissemination of the questionnaire

- **1190 questionnaires completed (86.7%)**

- **55 countries** in Europe & Central Asia (58.8%); Latin America & Caribbean (23%); East Asia & Pacific (6.9%); North America (5.4%); Middle East & North Africa (4.9%); Sub-Saharan Africa (0.7%) and South Asia (0.3%)

- **75% by PwMS**

Next steps:
- thematic analysis of free-text responses informed by James Lind Alliance guidance
- Identify SR questions in the form of PICOs
- prioritised with consumer/stakeholder panels.

Limitations
- Web-based, convenience sample approach may have favored respondents with digital knowledge and a web connection. Further improving accessibility and generalizability should be considered in future priority setting.
- Balancing anonymity with data on important determinants of people's care needs (respondents' age, gender and disease status).

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