

MS is more common than ever – but many people remain invisible

The latest Atlas of MS estimates that 3.1 million people are living with multiple sclerosis (MS) worldwide – up from 2.8 million in 2020. That's 1 in every 2,600 people, or 38 per 100,000 people. This increase likely reflects better diagnosis, improved data systems, growing awareness, people with MS living longer, and population growth.

Despite progress in MS detection and data collection, the Atlas of MS reveals gaps in diagnosis and surveillance capabilities in many parts of the world, which means MS is underdiagnosed and undercounted. The need for earlier diagnosis, stronger surveillance and equitable care is highlighted in global initiatives like the [WHO's Intersectoral Global Action Plan \(IGAP\)](#) - a lever for national advocacy and change.



“Knowing how many people are affected by MS is vital, it's the foundation for effective decision-making. But without diagnosis, people with MS are invisible. Everyone must be seen, counted and supported.”

Rachel King, Lead for the Atlas of MS, MS International Federation (MSIF)

Key findings



Global prevalence is rising – now 3.1 million up from 2.8 million in 2020



Every 5 minutes someone, somewhere in the world is diagnosed with MS



More women affected – out of 10 people with MS, 7 are female, 3 male



Children get MS too – at least 40,000 children and teens (under 18) with MS, up from 30,000 in 2020

Recommendations for action



Diagnose early so people are seen, counted and supported to access timely treatment and care



Make MS visible – invest in inclusive data systems



Use data to tailor care for everyone with MS including women, children and underserved groups



Drive change with evidence – inform policy, unlock funding and advance equity

This infographic was published in 2026 and is based on data collected through the 2024 Atlas of MS update.

These recommendations align with [WHO's Intersectoral Global Action Plan \(IGAP\)](#) on epilepsy and other neurological disorders (2022–2031).