

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS OF PATIENTS WITH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PROGRESSIVE MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Nurmetov N. B.,

Ibodullayev Z.R.

Tashkent state medical university

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Background: Multiple sclerosis (MS), particularly its progressive forms-Primary Progressive MS (PPMS) and Secondary Progressive MS (SPMS)-often leads to long-term disability, limiting patients' ability to continue in their chosen professions. Understanding the occupational profiles of patients affected by progressive MS may provide insights into the socio-economic impact of the disease and help optimize rehabilitation strategies.

Objective: To analyze and compare the professional backgrounds of patients diagnosed with PPMS and SPMS in order to assess the occupational diversity and potential vulnerability of various job categories to MS-related disability.

Methods: A total of 90 patients were included in the study, divided equally into two groups: 45 patients with PPMS and 45 with SPMS. Participants' pre-diagnosis professions were classified into ten occupational categories, including technical workers, educators, healthcare professionals, agricultural workers, and others. Data were collected through structured interviews and medical records.

Results: In the PPMS group, the most represented professions were engineers (13.3%), educators (11.1%), and agricultural workers (11.1%), while other occupations such as shop assistants, security personnel, and housewives also made up a significant proportion.

In the SPMS group, educators (15.5%) and healthcare workers (13.3%) were the most common, followed by retired or unemployed individuals (15.5%), indicating a higher disability burden in this group. Notably, 15.5% of SPMS patients reported no current occupational activity due to retirement, unemployment, or disability status, compared to a more balanced occupational distribution in the PPMS group.

Conclusion: Patients with progressive MS come from a wide range of professional backgrounds. However, individuals in physically or cognitively demanding professions—such as education, healthcare, and public service—appear to be more affected in the SPMS group. The findings highlight the need for early vocational support and tailored rehabilitation programs to maintain employment and quality of life in patients with progressive MS.