Understand Common MS Symptoms Experienced Among MS Patients Participating in an Online MS Community

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CONCLUSIONS
Understanding the physical and emotional symptoms that accompany MS but that are not always shared between patients and their doctors can help HCPs provide a more holistic approach to treating MS patients. This includes helping MS patients understand what symptoms they are likely to experience and how they can mitigate them.

METHODS
Research was conducted using de-identified organic discussions among members of MyMSTeam.com who reside in the US. MyMSTeam is a social network of 145,000 people living with MS (approximately 1 in 9 MS patients in US). A Natural Language Processing tool (NLP) analyzed 255,238 posts from April through December 2019. Key themes were identified and utilized to determine common symptoms and sentiment.

BACKGROUND
People with multiple sclerosis often seek perspectives and support from each other by connecting on patient social networks. These organic interactions provide unfiltered, rich insight into the day-to-day challenges and needs of patients, including both the emotional and physical issues they face. Directly understanding the holistic impact of MS on patients is crucial to treating patients, including improving doctor-patient interactions and enabling patients to better manage MS in its totality.

RESULTS
40% of MS related discussions on MyMSTeam were about symptoms (Figure 1), which were highly negative in tone (60%) (Figure 2). Pain is the most prevalent symptom discussed by members of MyMSTeam (35% of symptom discussions). Many of these pain-related discussions are specifically focused on leg pain (Figures 3 & 4). Fatigue was the second most discussed symptom (26%). It was often discussed in conjunction with depression and anxiety. Discussions suggested that while slowing progression is being addressed by HCPs, symptoms such as depression and anxiety are often not dealt with (Figure 5). 20% of conversations related to MS symptoms focused on cognitive challenges. This was the third most discussed symptom (Figures 3 & 6). While members turned to medicines such as Gabapentin to address symptoms like pain, they also sought out less traditional approaches like CBD in search of symptoms relief (Figures 7 & 8).

OBJECTIVES
Leverage an MS specific patient social network to understand the most prevalent symptoms of MS patients as they reach out to one another for information and support.