



# Multiple Sclerosis in Childhood - Two Albanian Paediatric Cases – Psychiatric Effects

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## Abstract:

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic autoimmune inflammatory demyelinating central nervous system disease. Most MS patients develop the disease between 20 and 40 years of age, with a predominance of women being affected. Children before the age of 16 represent an estimated 2.7–5% of individuals with MS, with 0.2–0.7% presenting under the age of 10 year.

In Albania, there are currently four paediatric patients (three girls, and one boy) diagnosed with MS, receiving treatment at the Paediatric Neurology Clinic in UHC in Tirana. One of the girls P.GJ. 12 years old started to have some acute symptoms such as numbness of right arm and leg and dysarthria within a 40 days period. The other girl E.XH. 14 years old had first symptoms with visibility reduction within a period of three months, gait problems and fatigue. Both of them with a normal developmental history, without any previous medical history. MRI scan of P.GJ. resulted in multiple cerebral lesions localized in subcortical frontal region, peri trigonal dexter and capsule-thalamic sinister. MRI scan of E.XH. Periventricular multiple lesions of white matter. FO: optic neuritis dexter.

There are overall no major differences in the clinical presentation between childhood- and adult-onset MS. Over 95% of childhood-onset MS patients have a relapsing-remitting MS course at onset. Childhood and adolescent-onset MS is characterized by a shorter interval between the first and second demyelinating event, and by a higher relapse frequency compared to adult-onset MS. Glucocorticoids remain the cornerstone of treatment for relapses. Disease-modifying agents (DMA) are moderately effective in reducing relapses and MRI activity. Paediatric-onset MS patients reach disability milestones at a younger age than their adult-onset counterparts. This evokes an increased sense of responsibility to effectively recognize, diagnose, and treat children and adolescents with MS.

## Keywords

Multiple Sclerosis, Children, Disabilities