

ARE INFECTIONS KEY ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN MS? YES

I. Steiner

Department of Neurology, Rabin Medical Center, Beilinson Campus, Petach Tikva, Israel
isteiner@cc.huji.ac.il

Multiple sclerosis (MS) currently defies clinical and scientific definitions and carries a prognosis that practically remains unchanged despite many years of intensive research. While the prevailing present dogma is that MS is an immune-mediated condition, it fulfills none of the criteria of an autoimmune disease. On the other hand there is enough significant data to suggest that infectious agents(s) could be involved in either direct damage to the white matter or induce inflammatory responses can secondarily affect the brain.

Our goal here is to review the data supporting the possibility that infection has a critical role in the disease, examine the list of potential candidates that have been suggested and outline an approach regarding the potential role of infectious agents in the etiology and pathogenesis of MS.