Tackling domestic violence and abuse:

What is the role of the healthcare professional working with people with multiple sclerosis? A qualitative study.

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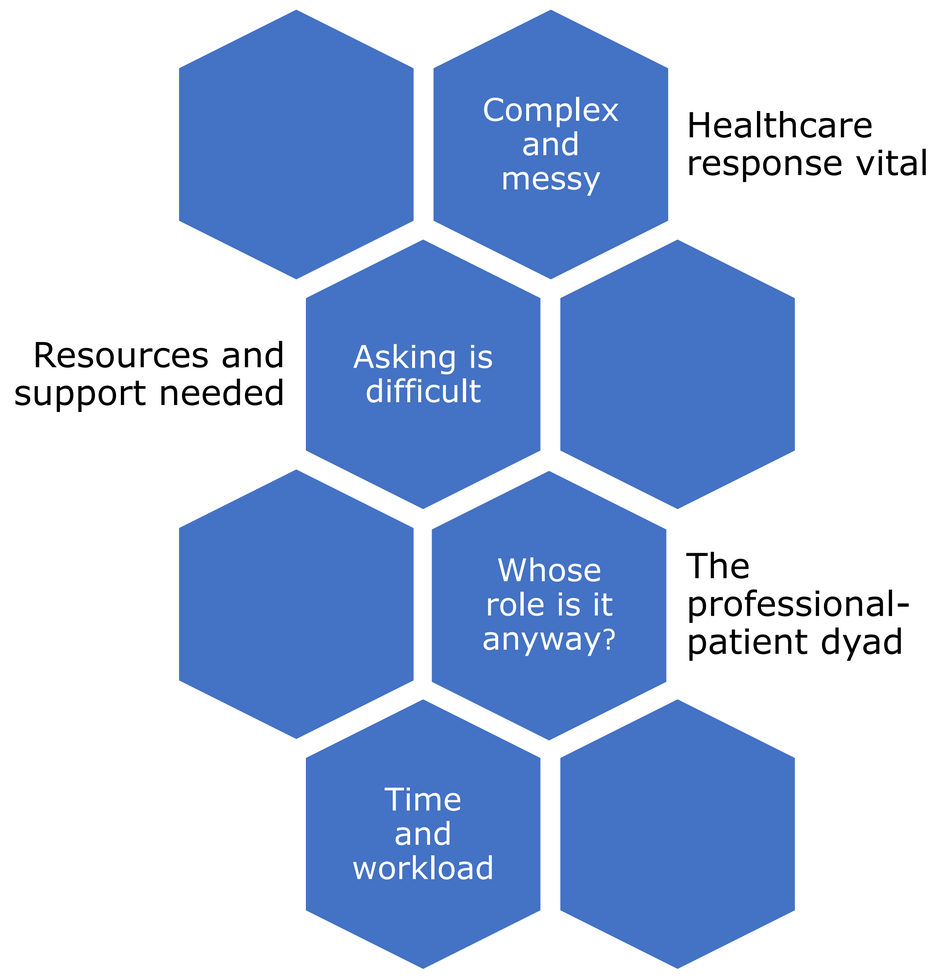
Why is this important?

Domestic violence and abuse (dva) has significant implications for health and society, with women being disproportionately affected. Mistreatment includes physical violence, but also economic, emotional, and psychological abuse. Survivors may face stigma, especially when seeking help. People with disabilities are at greater risk of experiencing dva and disabled women are especially vulnerable. Social isolation and prejudice, limited support, physical and financial dependence on abusers all mean that responses cannot be the same as for those without disabilities. Healthcare professionals (hcps) have a key role to play in this response. Multiple sclerosis care is one area requiring further research.

What do we know?

- Awareness growing of specific issues of dva and MS
- Several studies published recently
- Heightened risk psychological abuse (1,2,5)
- Economic abuse prevalent, especially in context of financial stress (2,3)
- Poor pre-morbid relationship significant (3)
- Notable gender differences in how caregiving role viewed (4)
- Poor mental health strong predictor of abuse (1,3,4)
- Trajectory of disease makes identification difficult (5)

A narrative review of the literature revealed the following themes in the wider literature



What's next?

Proposed research

- Qualitative study
- Individual interviews with hcps working in MS-care
- Views, perceptions, experiences and knowledge needs
- Grounded theory analysis
- Recruitment through professional networks

- **Moving forward**
- Sister project in Leeds, exploring the lived experience of women with MS
- Planned postdoc using results of both studies
- Resource development for training and practice development
- Feasibility study

(1) Morrison, E.H. , Sorkin D., Mosqueda L., Ayutyanont N. (2020) 'Abuse and neglect of people with multiple sclerosis: A survey with the North American Research Committee on Multiple Sclerosis (NARCOMS)', *Multiple Sclerosis and Related Disorders*, 46, p. 102530.

(2) Manouchehri, E., Ghavami, V., Larki, M., Saeidi, M., & Latifnejad Roudsari, R. (2022). Domestic violence experienced by women with multiple sclerosis: a study from the North-East of Iran. *BMC Women's Health*, *22*(1), pp. 321

(3) Alejandra, Sanchez-Guzman & Paz, Francisco & Zoila, Trujillo & Espinola, Mariana. (2017). Domestic violence in multiple sclerosis: Barrier to neurorehabilitation. *Journal of Neurology and Neurorehabilitation Research*. 2. 21-24.

(4)Shapiro, J., Wiglesworth, A. and Morrison, E.H., (2013) Views on disclosing mistreatment: a focus group study of differences between people with MS and their caregivers. *Multiple sclerosis and related disorders*, *2*(2), pp.96-102.

(5) Eid, K., Torkildsen, Ø., Aarseth, J. (2022) 'Abuse and revictimization in adulthood in multiple sclerosis: a cross-sectional study during pregnancy', *Journal of Neurology*, 269(11), pp. 5901–5909.

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