



REUTERS  **Neurological disease common, survey finds**
HEALTH INFORMATION

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and other neurological diseases may be far more common than most people believe, according to new estimates published on Monday.

Nearly 1 out of 1,000 Americans has multiple sclerosis (MS) and 10 out of 1,000 elderly Americans has Parkinson's disease, the survey found.

"Our estimate of MS prevalence is about 50 percent higher than a comprehensive review from 1982," said Dr. Deborah Hirtz of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, who led the survey.

It is not clear whether the disease is actually more common or if it is being diagnosed more accurately, she said.

Dr. Hirtz and colleagues reviewed studies from nearly 500 medical papers published between 1990 and 2005 for their report. The survey, published in *Neurology*, also found the rate of Alzheimer's disease was up substantially from past estimates, with 67 out of 1,000 Americans over the age of 65 affected. Four out of every 100,000 has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), the survey found.

The report projects that the number of people with Parkinson's disease will double from about 4.3 million people now to 9 million people worldwide over the next 25 years.

It corroborated other studies on childhood neurological disorders, finding that nearly 6 out of every 1,000 children has autism, and 2 out of every 1,000 children has cerebral palsy.

The investigators found that 101 out of every 100,000 Americans have a traumatic brain injury each year, 50 percent fewer than previous estimates.

More than 180 out of every 100,000 people have a stroke each year, and close to 5 out of every 100,000 have a new spinal cord injury each year.

Dr. Steven Albert of the University of Pittsburgh said the impact of Alzheimer's disease will be substantial as the population ages. "Current projections of Alzheimer's disease suggest that there will be about 10 million cases in the United States in 2050, of which 6 million are expected to have moderate or severe dementia," Albert writes in a commentary in the journal.

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