

Biogen employees rally in 11 cities to raise awareness about MS

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To commemorate World Multiple Sclerosis Day, Biogen Idec India, the global leader in research and treatment of multiple sclerosis, observed World Multiple Sclerosis Day in India through interactive and educative road shows across India.

As part of the initiative, employees rallied across 11 different cities viz Gurgaon, Fardiabad, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Cochin and Pune to educate people about Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and express solidarity with people suffering from MS. The day of service was designed to increase the role of employee volunteerism with focus on patients, healthcare providers and local communities.

Wearing a MS tee and a wig, Biogen Idec employees interacted with the local community and distributed information pamphlets at parks, local market and busy streets. With the theme message of "Together let's fight MS," healthcare providers were also made aware about the significance of the day and importance of early diagnosis. The aim of the initiative was to raise awareness of MS, solicit public support for improving opportunities and outcomes for MS patients and create an environment where people can understand MS better.

MS is an auto-immune disease in which the body attacks its own cells and tissues. Due to damage in the nerve layer i.e. myelin sheath, transmission of signals from the brain and spinal cord gets affected. The most common symptoms are weakness in the limbs, numbness, sudden loss of balance, blurred vision that may lead to paralysis. The disease mostly strikes youth at a time when are starting new careers, relationships or making plans for the future. Multiple sclerosis can be difficult to diagnose early in the course of the disease because symptoms often come and go - sometimes disappearing for months.

According to estimates, there are between 100,000 - 200,000 multiple sclerosis patients in India, even though that there are no exact statistics on MS. Women are twice more likely to fall prey to MS than men. Genetic and environmental factors are thought to contribute to MS, but a specific cause for the disease hasn't been yet identified nor a permanent cure although

certain disease modifying medications such as interferons and monoclonal antibodies can help reduce recurrent attacks and prevent disability in the long run.