

NARR: Multiple Sclerosis is a degenerative disease in which a person's own immune system attacks the nerve cells in the brain causing debilitating symptoms that can affect every part of the body.

It is so pervasive; there is someone with MS in almost every family in America. Barack Obama and Mitt Romney both have family members with MS.

A mysterious trend in the fight against MS is the discovery that MS affects women three times more often than men. This is an important clue into the causes and possible treatments of MS.

Through the generosity of the Dinner of Champions and others, a research study was funded in 1998 to specifically study gender differences in MS.

What they discovered was astounding.

PIC: *Doctors/interviews explaining estriol levels in pregnant women and its effects.*

NARR: Doctors then did a small study in which 10-12 women took estriol in addition to their other medications. Again, they were stunned. Using MRI technology, doctors discovered that in a very short amount of time, these women experienced an 80% drop in inflammatory lesions of the brain.

This would mean a significant decrease in brain damage, relapse, fatigue, and disability. Giving women more years of walking and functioning as healthy adults.

PIC: *Doctors talk more about the study.*

NARR: Estriol is a type of sex hormone that rises during pregnancy. It is thought to suppress the immune system so that the mother's body does not reject the fetus as a foreign body.

The six drugs currently available to treat MS are all costly and require painful injections.

National MS Society
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Developing an estriol drug for women with MS could significantly change all that.

Unlike current MS medications, estriol can be taken in pill form, avoiding the fear, discomfort, and inconvenience of coming in for routine injections.

MS medications used today cost anywhere from \$20 a month to \$20,000 a year, whereas estriol could cost as little as 50 cents a day.

Estriol is currently used in Europe to treat menopause, however, it is not approved in the United States for MS.

To get approval, the MS Society plans to do a three-year trial involving 130 women at seven prominent universities.

GRFX: **UCLA**
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WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY, DETROIT

NARR: If the study goes well, we can begin the process of getting FDA approval for a pill.

Down the road, doctors believe the study of estriol could also lead to a hormone drug for men with MS as well as potentially helping people with autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus.

Because estriol is a relatively cheap drug and already available in other countries, pharmaceutical companies are not motivated to fund research.

The cost of funding such a project is \$4,611,651. The Southern California Chapter has pledged to raise all the money necessary for this vital research. \$3.2 million has already been raised but more needs to be done.

National MS Society
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The generous contributions of the Dinner of Champions can help us complete our commitment and give new hope to families around the world.

GRFX: Fade up on the **NATIONAL MS SOCIETY** logo.

THANK YOU

Fade out.