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Familial MS May Be More Destructive

FRIDAY, Oct. 12 (HealthDay News) -- Multiple sclerosis that runs in families appears to cause more severe brain damage than the non-familial form, say University at Buffalo researchers.

They used MRI scans to examine the brains of 759 MS patients and found that the 198 patients with familial MS had significantly more destructed lesions, and significantly lower volume of whole brain, white matter and gray matter, as well as other indications of greater brain damage.

"Patients whose parents, children or siblings (first-degree relatives) had MS showed more damage than patients who had cousins with MS. This indicates that the closer the relationship, the greater the risk of MS," research team leader Dr. Robert Zivadinov, professor of neurology, said in a prepared statement.

"Of particular interest is the finding of more severe gray matter damage and more lesions, particularly in those with MS in first-degree relatives. These findings are very interesting, and we will be investigating them further," he added.

The study was to be presented Friday at a European Committee for the Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis meeting in Prague, Czech Republic.

"From the early 1980s on, MS researchers thought that genetic factors likely played a role in the disease, that its traits were determined by several different genes, and our findings support this hypothesis," Zivadinov said.

"Our MRI analysis showed a difference between the severity of disease characteristics in familial MS patients versus what we call sporadic, or non-familial, MS patients. These differences may be related to some disease-modifying genes, but to prove this, we must do further investigation," he added.

More information

The U.S. National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke has more about [MS](#).

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