

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Working and Having MS

**Professor Margaret Vickers from the School of Management, College of Business and Law is being funded by Trauma Research International Pty. Ltd., a small philanthropic organisation, to investigate the workplace experiences of people who have Multiple Sclerosis (MS).**

'MS is a degenerative disease of the central nervous system which is often unpredictable in its course and may be progressive over time. The disease prevents messages from the brain and spinal cord to reach other parts of the body, resulting in weakness, sensory problems, visual impairment, and difficulties walking. It is often a misunderstood and highly stigmatised disease, especially at work,' explains Prof. Vickers. 'My previous exploratory work investigating the life and work experiences for people with MS uncovered both negative and positive aspects of working that require further investigation. Whilst some people felt very supported at work and were able to continue to work productively despite their illness, others reported very negative workplace experiences, including being forced out of work earlier than the disease required, being bullied and discriminated against at work, not getting the support they needed to enable them to continue working, as well as experiencing difficulties transitioning away from work if they had to.'

Over a two year period this study will investigate more fully the details of these and other aspects of life at work for people with MS. It is anticipated that the study will facilitate a better understanding of inequality, discrimination and marginalisation that people with Multiple Sclerosis experience. It will also provide managers, co-workers, family members, allied health professionals, counsellors and other professionals with information about the work world for those with a highly stigmatising chronic disease.



By providing up to date evidence of both the positive and negative work experiences of people with Multiple Sclerosis, this research will provide interested individuals, employers, policy makers, and service providers with information that will assist workers with Multiple Sclerosis towards a better working life and conditions in the future, enabling them to remain at work and independent for much longer.

**Project Title:** An Exploration of Workplace Experiences of People with Multiple Sclerosis (MS): A Qualitative Study  
**Funding has been set at:** \$32,270  
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