Polymyositis: A Rare Autoimmune Muscle Disease

Disease Overview[1,2]

Polymyositis (PM) is a rare, autoimmune and muscle disorder characterized by chronic muscle inflammation and weakness. PM is gradual in onset, and without treatment could eventually affect one's ability to rise from a seated position, climb stairs, lift objects or reach overhead.

Cause[1,2]

Like other types of myositis, the cause of PM is **unknown**. PM shares many characteristics with autoimmune disorders as the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy muscle fibers.

Associated Conditions[2,4]

- Lung Disease
- Lupus
- Scleroderma
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Raynaud's Phenomenon
- Viral Infections
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Connective Tissue Disorders
- Sjogren's Syndrome

Affected Populations[5]

Yearly incidence is between **1 to 5 people per million**, and the prevalence is 1/14,000. PM most commonly affects adults over the age of 20, particularly people in their **30s, 40s or 50s**.

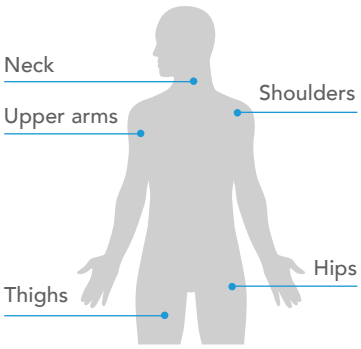
Other Risk Factors[2,5]

Gender: PM is more common in women than in men by a 2:1 ratio.

Ethnicity: In the United States, a Black-to-Caucasian ratio of 5:1 has been reported.

Symptoms that Arise Over Time[1,3,5]

Muscle weakness on both sides and areas, especially those closest to the center of the body



- Muscle Aches
- Weight Loss
- Difficulty Swallowing
- Difficulty Speaking
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Shortness of Breath
- Chronic Dry Cough

Diagnosis and Tests[4]

- Clinical Blood Tests
- Electro-myography
- MRI
- Muscle Biopsy

Doctors Who Help Manage Care[7]

- Rheumatologists
- Neurologists

Current Treatment Options for Those with PM[4,6]

Treatment is based upon signs and symptoms, but physicians can offer high-dose corticosteroids and other **immunosuppressive agents**. **Exercise and physical therapy** are recommended to improve muscle strength and flexibility. **Speech therapy** can be recommended for difficulties with swallowing and speech. Some may also recommend infusion of intravenous immunoglobulin to block autoantibodies.

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References:

1. myositis.org/about-myositis/types-of-myositis/polymyositis/ | **2.** mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/polymyositis/symptoms-causes/syc-20353208 | **3.** my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/12053-polymyositis | **4.** rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/7425/polymyositis | **5.** orpha.net/consor/cgi-bin/OC_Exp.php?Lng=GB&Expert=732 | **6.** mda.org/disease/polymyositis/medical-management | **7.** myositis.org/patient-support/find-doctor/