

Persona 1 MS Patient



Laura Vermeulen (Age 48, Female)

Laura lives near the outer ring of Hasselt city, in a terraced house in a small street which connects to one of Hasselt's main streets. She is married and has two sons (age 17 and 19), one of which recently moved out. Laura has been a secretary for nearly 20 years, for multiple companies. She has been working for her latest employer (a small internet firm) for about seven years. In her free time she loves to work in her garden and take part in painting classes with other women of her age.

Eight years ago Laura was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, this was one of the reasons why she decided to get a job at a smaller company. The symptoms of her disease come to her in isolated attacks which usually last several days or a few weeks. During these attacks she can feel loss of sensitivity, sometimes she also has muscle spasms. The relapses she experiences bother her, but do not greatly obstruct her from leading a normal life. She gets uncomfortable, annoyed and sometimes a bit panicky when her arms or legs get numb. Every now and then, a sudden uncontrolled tightening of her jaw muscles cause her teeth to hurt.

The past few months she has been feeling tired during work and noticed the high level of concentration needed to perform certain tasks. One such a task is taking notes and listening to someone speaking on the phone simultaneously. Because of this, Laura has had several meetings at the MS center in Diepenbeeck the past few weeks. At the MS center it was established that she has difficulty performing motor and cognitive tasks simultaneously. As a result she has to exercise combining these tasks two hours a week.

Persona 2 MS Therapist

Erick Peeters (Age 52, Male)

Erick is a middle aged man who lives in the center of Diepenbeek. He decided to go living there with his wife 20 years ago because it would make it easier to travel to his work everyday, namely the Biomed building near to the UHasselt campus. Erick has been working there for almost 30 years as a therapist and is primarily involved with patients who suffer from Multiple Sclerosis.



A typical day for Erick consists of some research for the topics he's currently involved with and seeing the MS patients who made an appointment. His goal is to try to help them as much as possible to have a normal life, despite the disease.

It's always important to keep the patients up to date of their situation, so that they know if they are making progress or need to improve in certain areas. That is the reason Erick first has a short conversation with the patient where he explains the situation before starting with the necessary exercises.

Every patient needs his own personalized training, so Erick has to prepare the specific tasks that each patient has to perform. After he explains the task and its purpose he supervises the patient and collects measurements to put in the patients file.

The results are briefly discussed with the patient after the exercises to determine if there has been any progress. Sometimes he decides to give the patient some extra exercises to perform at home until the next appointment.