

JUNE 2026

CANOPTICS 2026



NEWSLETTER



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Principal Investigators' Message	1
Study Overview	1
Patient Story	2
Patient Education Events	4
Research Findings	5

● CANOPTICS Study Overview

CANOPTICS is the first prospective cohort study, tracking diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes over time in patients with NMOSD and MOGAD in Canada.

Despite current treatments, many patients continue to accumulate disability. The ultimate goal is to reduce disease activity with new and better treatments and to improve quality of life for people living with these diseases in the future.

● Message from the Principal Investigator, Dr. Dalia Rotstein

Dear Study Participants,

Thank you for participating in the CANOPTICS study, we appreciate your dedication to completing the yearly questionnaires. By volunteering to participate you are providing an amazing gift to the NMOSD and MOGAD community.

This newsletter includes an overview of the CANOPTICS study, a patient story, info about the upcoming patient community day and latest NMOSD/MOGAD pregnancy and family planning research findings using CANOPTICS data.

Thank you for joining us in our mission to improve quality life and care for people living with NMOSD and MOGAD.

Sincerely,
Dalia Rotstein, MD, MPH
Neurologist
St. Michael's Hospital



Patient Stories

● A life interrupted, a future reclaimed: Jennifer's NMOSD story (Snippets from the Patient Voice, 2026)

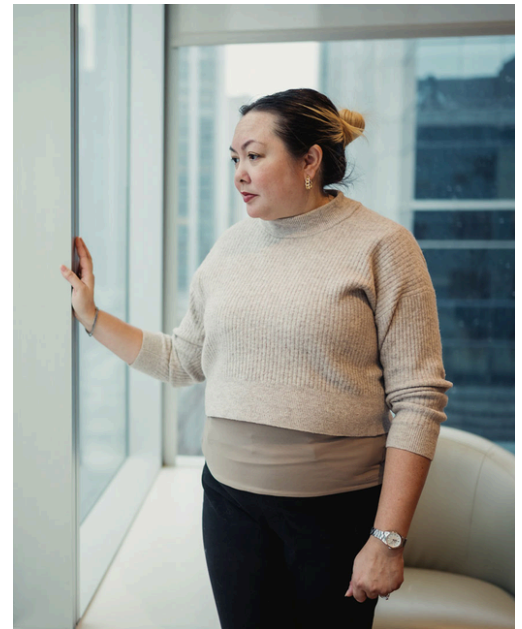
In 2009, Jennifer Drolet was like a lot of other women in their early twenties. "I was very ambitious professionally and wanted to travel the world," she says. "I didn't know if I wanted kids. I was focused on discovering what life had to offer." But in September of 2009, she had a sudden major attack that paralyzed her from the bra line down. Doctors suspected multiple sclerosis, or MS.

In 2010, after another attack — this one causing sudden vision loss — Jennifer finally received an explanation. At the young age of 27, she was diagnosed with neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorder (NMOSD).

Suddenly, Jennifer's big dreams felt fragile and unsure. She found herself facing fear, uncertainty, and a loss of control.

This has been Jennifer's "new normal" for 16 years now and although she's learned to adapt, living with NMOSD hadn't gotten any easier until recently. "There are days where I feel like someone else is in control of my body," she says. "It doesn't move, feel, or respond the way I want it to. It's beyond frustrating."

The diagnosis affected her loved ones, too. Jennifer's husband took on a major support role overnight, altering the fabric of their relationship. For years, Jennifer struggled with chronic symptoms. Worse, she faced frequent, unpredictable relapses — six or seven between June 2024 and February 2025 alone.



"For me, a relapse feels like uneasiness within my body," says Jennifer. "I'll notice that climbing the stairs is more difficult, and then later that my legs feel heavy. And then suddenly everything progresses rapidly, and I can't do the stairs at all."

While Jennifer was able to recover from some setbacks — "My neurologist Dr. AlOhaly and I both fought hard to regain my ability to walk the same way after my recent attacks," she says — other symptoms became permanent: an unrelenting abnormal sensation in her legs ("Ever since my initial attack, my legs have always felt like they're in a bit of an echo... I can feel sensation, but it's muted," she says), back pain, eye fatigue.

- **A life interrupted, a future reclaimed: Jennifer's NMOSD story (Snippets from the Patient Voice, 2026) continued.**

For Jennifer, it's all about living every moment to its fullest and planning a future that lights her up. "I'm still really focused on my career. I'm not done building it yet," she says. "And I want to travel more with my family. I'd love to travel to Indonesia to honour my family's Dutch-Indonesian roots."

At 44, Jennifer still has all the ambition and excitement about life that she did at 27. "In the moments where I do feel great, I just go for it," she says. "If I want to do something, I'm going to do it." With her family by her side, she's focused on protecting the progress she's fought so hard for, and making the most of every good day.

To read more about Jennifer's journey living with NMOSD, check out this newsletter.

<https://www.patientvoice.io/a-life-interrupted-a-future-reclaimed-jennifers-nmosd-story>

Excerpts were taken with permission from Jennifer and Dr. AlOhalay.



Please reach out if you would like to share your story about living with NMOSD/MOGAD or your experiences participating in the CANOPTICS study.

Dr. Dalia Rotstein - Principal Investigator
Nandita Vas - Research Coordinator I
> Nandita.Vas3@unityhealth.to
> 416-864-6060 ext 2366

Patient Education Events

- **ECTRIMS Patient Community – Online and Onsite at Metro Toronto Convention Centre – South Building**

Friday, 23 October 2026, 15.00 - 18.00 EDT



Join us for Patient Community Day 2026, a dedicated event for people affected by multiple sclerosis (MS), neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorder (NMOSD), and Myelin Oligodendrocyte Glycoprotein Antibody-Associated Disease (MOGAD). Taking place alongside MSToronto2026, this event brings together leading experts, healthcare professionals, researchers, and people with lived experience to explore the latest developments in research, treatment, care, and quality of life.

Why Attend?

- Latest Research, Simplified: Understand new discoveries in clear, real-life terms
- Ask the Experts: Submit your questions and hear answers live
- Condition-Specific Insights: Dedicated content for MS, NMOSD, and MOGAD
- Global & Accessible: Available online with live translation in 50+ languages

Click on the link to register:

<https://www.ectrimspatientcommunity.eu/>

Please reach out if you have any questions and suggestions about the patient education events. (Email: Nandita.Vas3@unityhealth.to).

Looking forward to seeing you at the events!

Focus on Findings

Your participation in CANOPTICS has contributed to research about NMOSD and MOGAD and has allowed CANOPTICS investigators to present their findings at international conferences and publish research papers.

• NMOSD, MOGAD and MG Pregnancy and Family Planning Research Paper

THE LANCET
Neurology

Current evidence and knowledge gaps in family planning and pregnancy in myasthenia gravis, NMOSD, and MOGAD

[Dalia L Rotstein, MD](#)^{a,b} · [Raed Alroughani, MD](#)^c · [Georgina Arrambide, MD](#)^d · [Edgar Carnero Contentti, MD](#)^{e,f} · [Mashina Chomba, MBChB](#)^g · [Prof Kazuo Fujihara, MD](#)^h · et al. [Show more](#)

Purpose: To provide evidence-based guidance on pregnancy and family planning for patients with NMOSD, MOGAD and myasthenia gravis (MG) in order to optimise maternal outcomes while minimising risks to the offspring.

Main Findings:

- Pregnancy affects disease activity differently across the conditions, but there is higher risk for attacks after birth.
- Many medications during pregnancy are safer than previously thought.
 - Many therapies (ex. corticosteroids, azathioprine, rituximab, complement inhibitors) can be safely continued in pregnancy, while teratogenic agents like methotrexate and mycophenolate must be avoided.
- The timing of treatment during pregnancy is critical
 - Antibodies (disease or treatment related) typically pass through the placenta during the 2nd or 3rd trimester which likely leads to neonatal changes such as infections or B-cell depletion.
- Breastfeeding benefits may outweigh minimal drug exposure risks.

Please contact Nandita.Vas3@unityhealth.to if you would like to feature in our newsletters by sharing your story about living with NMOSD/MOGAD or your experiences participating in the CANOPTICS study.

Let's build a community together!

HAPPY SUMMER!



Dr. Dalia Rotstein - Principal Investigator



Nandita Vas - Research Coordinator I

> Nandita.Vas3@unityhealth.to

> 416-864-6060 ext 2366