

**Question for written answer E-003189/2014
to the Commission
Rule 117
Rareș-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)**

Subject: Contraceptives may increase the risk of multiple sclerosis

Women who take oral contraceptives have up to a 50% higher risk of multiple sclerosis, according to studies carried out by scientists at the Kaiser Foundation Research Institute in California.

The US researchers identified 305 women who had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis over a three-year period, and compared their use of oral contraceptives – mainly a combination of two hormones – with that of 3 050 healthy women. In total, 29% of the women with multiple sclerosis and 29% of the healthy women had used oral contraceptives for at least three months in the three years before symptoms began. Women who had used oral contraceptives were 35% more likely to develop the disease than those who did not use them, while women who had used them but had stopped at least one month before symptoms started were 50% more likely to develop multiple sclerosis.

Given that multiple sclerosis is the most common disabling neurological condition, affecting the lives of more than 2 million people across the world:

1. Will the Commission look into this recent study and issue an opinion on the subject?
2. Will the Commission launch a new campaign aimed at raising awareness of the implications of this autoimmune disease?
3. Will the Commission continue to encourage scientific cooperation between European Union countries on research into this disease and identifying the best ways of treating it?