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### Trial surgery may benefit MS patients

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BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) - The first effective drug for MS was pioneered here in Buffalo, by Dr. Lawrence Jacobs. Now, doctors here are doing the first scientific trial to discover whether surgery can benefit MS patients.

We don't know why people get MS, but many patients have abnormal narrowing in the veins that drain blood from the brain. You can see an example here. So maybe opening those veins will help. Doctors at Millard Fillmore Gates Circle are attempting to find out.

Dr. Elad Levy explained, "This is the first randomized trial where patients are going to be enrolled under the rigors of a scientific study in order to determine whether this procedure can be done safely."

This week, Dr. Levy and his colleagues at Gates Circle used angioplasty to open the veins of ten patients. One of them came all the way from Virginia to participate, even though we don't know whether it will work.

Tracie Jacquemin said, "So, um, we'll see. We'll see. I'm trying hard not to be too optimistic!"

Here's an example of one of the cases. This shows a very narrow vein.

"It blocks down to one millimeter here, one seventh of its normal diameter," explained Dr. Levy.

Here you can see the balloon being blown up inside that vein to make it wider. The first ten patients will test the safety of the procedure. If it's safe, 20 more patients will participate in a blinded study. Only half will receive the angioplasty, and it may or may not work.

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Dr. Levy said, "And it's just an overwhelming, from patient volunteers who not only want to get better themselves, but are hoping to advance the scientific field in ms and do something for patients globally."

Jacquemin added, "For someone who was 31 as I was when I was diagnosed, not have to go through this last 21 years that I've gone through, it would be wonderful to contribute to that. It's really exciting."

This is a new idea, and it's controversial, but there are some good reasons to think narrow veins might be involved in MS. It's fitting that the first trial will be done here in Buffalo, because the first trial of Interferon was done here. And Gates Circle has one of the best vascular neurosurgery groups in the world.

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