

Across the Other Side of the Pond, but Connected Through MS



My name is Natalie Diana Busari. I am a Black woman and a mother of two living in the U.K. with multiple sclerosis. I was diagnosed with MS in November 2016, just two months after giving birth to my second child.

Cry me a river, right? Well, that's how it used to be when I would share my diagnosis story.

But fast forward to today... I'm just shy of 7 years living with this once soul-destroying disease. I now wear my story like the strongest armour you have ever seen.

Like many of you in the States, I never asked to be an MS Warrior. I would have been satisfied burying my head in the sand and just getting on with life, just minding my own business. I was painfully shy.

MS is my cross to bear, and I will live with it quietly in the darkness. It's what a lot of my relatives wanted me to do because they didn't want to deal with it. Go to your room and pray it away. If I believe in the power of God, my MS will just go away by itself.

Almost 7 years later, and guess what, my MS is still here! It doesn't mean my faith wasn't strong enough. To me, it meant that God had a bigger plan for me, and I just didn't see it at the time.

I am an MS advocate for the Black MS community, and I have my own non-profit patient

organization called The Nerve of My Multiple Sclerosis. My small team and I support, represent and advocate for Black people living with MS who struggle with the disease and don't have a supportive network to speak to.

I want to show my appreciation to the Black MS community across the pond. We may have an ocean between us, but we are MS connected. I have had the pleasure of getting to speak with a few amazing Black American MS warriors, and it was very clear from our conversations that the Black MS community on both sides have similar issues with representation in the wider MS community.

More research and trials need to be tailored with the Black community in mind. There is still a lot unknown about how MS affects us as Black people and why MS may progress more aggressively. MS was once considered a white person's disease, and the Black community is suffering because of that.

Racial discrimination and bias within the healthcare system in the U.S. and the U.K. are very similar and have caused barriers such as health inequalities. Knowing that we have similar experiences makes the bond between us stronger.

I'm inspired by the advocacy and determination of the Black MS community in the U.S., and I hope to learn from their ways to encourage this in the U.K.