Although it could be argued that this reduction may simply be the result of reduced life expectancy in MS patients, this is unlikely, as an age-specific Cox survival model also showed a significant reduction in the risk of cancer. Similarly, it is unlikely that this would represent under-reporting of cancer because patients are typically in closer contact with health practitioners than the normal population. Explanations could include lifestyle alterations following diagnosis, genetic factors or immunological changes due to MS. Further study of mechanisms is therefore warranted, but more immediately, the results of this meta-analysis will be of use for MS patients and their care givers.

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