That’s why symptoms include muscle weakness, respiratory failure, speech loss and inefficient swallowing, which cause feeding problems and weight loss.

Currently there is no cure, and it is the third most prevalent progressive neurodegenerative disease, after Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases.

In Portugal, 200 new cases are diagnosed every year. You might know people who suffered from it.

June 21st is Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Day, or A.L.S. Day, to be shorter.

But the truth is, we don’t know exactly what causes A.L.S. and new diagnostic techniques are required, such as biomarkers.

Mitochondria, which function as the cells’ batteries, are dysfunctional and have high levels of oxidative stress. Therefore, we can use antioxidants and try to “recharge” mitochondria.

Hereditary factors explain less that 20% of cases, and for those we can think of gene therapy.

For the other 80%, it is presumed to be due to environmental causes, and therefore, other strategies will have to be studied.

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Scientific research can help in finding new solutions, but it is important not to forget the needs of actual patients in real life.

We must face A.L.S from all sides, from all points of view. Only together we will succeed.

While there is no efficient pharmacological therapy, treatment of A.L.S involves speech therapy, nutrition, physiotherapy and psychological support.

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