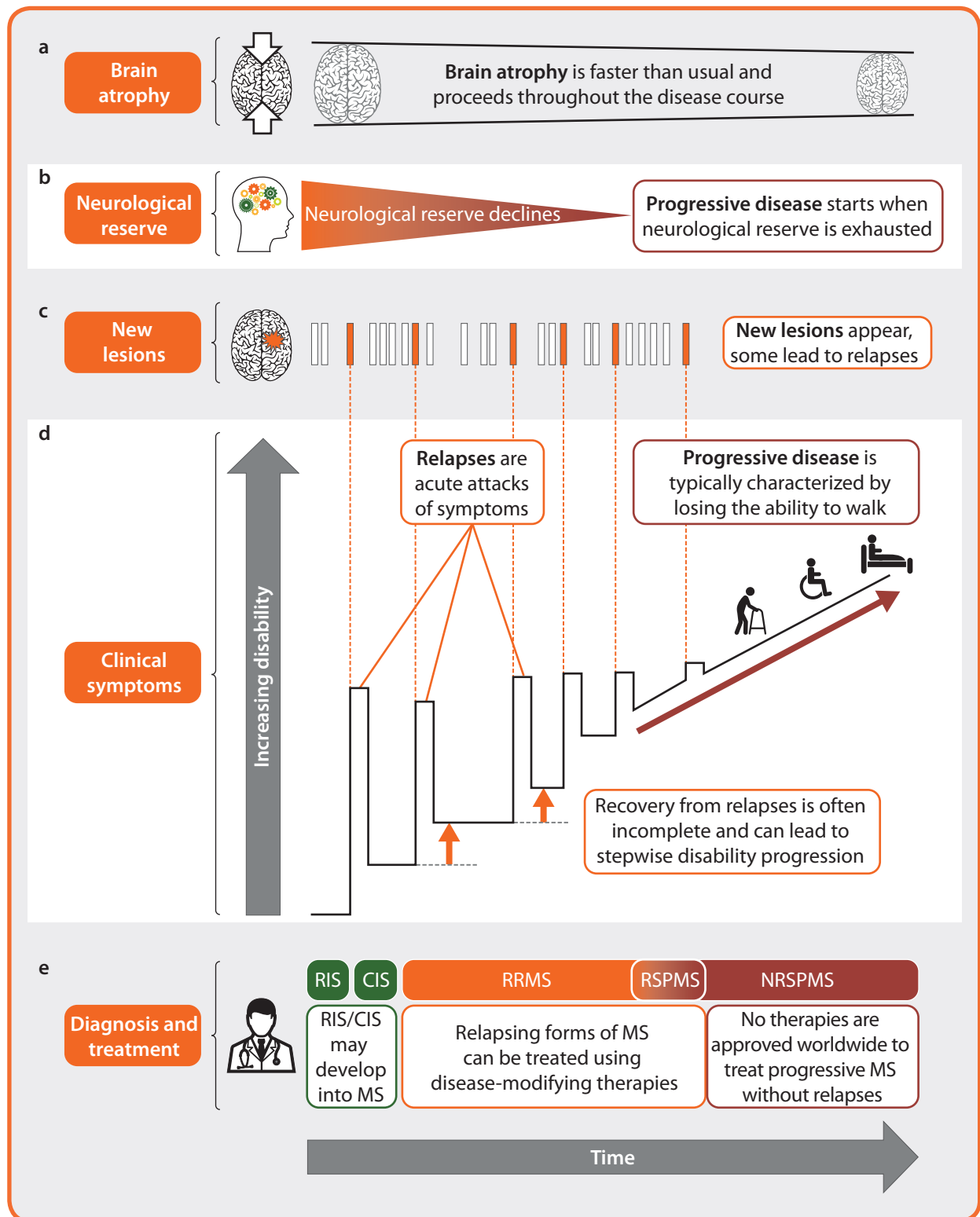


Typical disease course in relapsing–remitting MS



The damage caused by MS typically leads to relapses followed by progressive disease.

a. The brains of people with MS shrink (atrophy) more rapidly than usual as a result of damage caused by the disease. **b.** The brain can use its neurological reserve to compensate for damage by remodelling itself. However, when neurological reserve is used up, the clinical symptoms of the disease may progress. **c.** MS causes lesions – acute areas of damage to the brain and spinal cord that accumulate over time. If a lesion noticeably disrupts nerve function, it leads to a relapse (an attack of clinical symptoms). **d.** A typical MS disease course involves relapses, followed by progressive disease. **e.** A person with MS may have a variety of diagnoses over time (see text for details), but disease-modifying therapies are effective only in the early stages when relapses are still present.

CIS, clinically isolated syndrome; NRSPMS, non-relapsing secondary progressive multiple sclerosis; RIS, radiologically isolated syndrome; RRMS, relapsing–remitting multiple sclerosis; RSPMS, relapsing secondary progressive multiple sclerosis.

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