How to be referred to the Bath AS Course

Patients should be referred for assessment by their local consultant or a GP.

Written referrals should be made to:

Dr Raj Sengupta, Consultant Rheumatologist.
RNHRD, Upper Borough Walls, Bath, BA1 1RL

Tel: 01225 473444
Fax: 01225 473437

Further information about the course can be obtained from:

Belinda Jones, Course Administrator.

Email: belinda.jones@rnhrd.nhs.uk
Tel: 01225 473455

Or visit our website
www.rnhrd.nhs.uk
Ankylosing Spondylitis

Management of Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) has undergone dramatic changes in recent years. ASAS/EULAR recommendations (1,2) advise both pharmacological and non-pharmacological management. Appropriate diagnosis and early intervention from a specialist multidisciplinary team is crucial to reduce the long-term effects of this condition.

Self-management is a key aspect of care, and it is recognised that active engagement in self-management of AS has a positive influence on its outcome.

Drug treatment has undergone significant changes with the advent of the anti-TNF agents, and these have been shown to be remarkably effective for AS patients.

What we offer

The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) has a long tradition of providing excellent clinical care for AS patients locally and nationally. We aim to help with all aspects of AS, from early diagnosis to treatment and the optimisation of drug treatments.

At the RNHRD we offer a dedicated AS course, led by a Consultant Rheumatologist and specialist physiotherapy team. It includes involvement from the multidisciplinary team, including occupational therapist, counsellor, pharmacist, podiatrist, dietician, clinical nurse specialist and AS administrator.

Feedback from patients is unequivocally positive. Twelve patients interviewed in 2011 expressed improvements in knowledge, coping and relating to others, as well as physical and emotional improvement (3).

Effectiveness of the Course

A meta-analysis in 2008 demonstrated that home-based and supervised exercise programmes are better than no intervention and that a supervised programme is better than a home programme (4). There is also evidence that the improvement in outcome measures achieved during intensive physiotherapy programmes is maintained over time (5).

Published data (6) from a group of 236 patients on the RNHRD course show that, on average, patients report a significant improvement in the following Bath Indices:

- Bath AS Disease Activity Index (BASDAI); 18%
- Bath AS Functional Index (BASFI); 25%
- Bath AS Metrology Index (BASMI); 22%

Additional published research from our patient group has demonstrated that 65% of those attending showed a significant improvement in their fatigue levels (7). Further work from our cohort has demonstrated an improvement in functional ability (8) and quality of life for patients with varying degrees of disease severity.

References


