Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) is a term used to describe a collection of symptoms where pain in a limb (usually a single limb) is the major problem. Pain may start for no apparent reason or following injury to the limb (such as a fracture). Whereas pain would normally settle as the injury heals, in CRPS intense pain continues and spreads beyond the original site of the injury. Other features of CRPS include altered temperature and colour changes and impaired movement of the painful limb.

CRPS can be difficult to diagnose as there is no single diagnostic test and no cure currently exists. Research has shown that the average timescale between onset of symptoms and diagnosis is currently two years. Appropriate diagnosis and early intervention from a specialist multidisciplinary team (MDT) is crucial to reduce the long-term effects of this complex condition which can have a significant impact on a person, affecting all areas of their life and that of their family.

**WHAT DO WE DO?**

At the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases we offer a dedicated CRPS service, led by Professor Candy McCabe. Our specialist multidisciplinary team is highly experienced in rehabilitating people with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. Established as one of the first specialist services, we have over ten years’ experience in treating CRPS and receive referrals from the UK and abroad. We are internationally renowned for our research in CRPS, which underpins our treatment.

Our highly specialised team deliver CRPS specific care by providing appropriate diagnosis, assessment and treatment of CRPS and offer a residential rehabilitation programme tailored to the individual needs of the person. Our service offers:

- National and international referrals
- Prompt and timely specialist intervention
- CRPS specific treatment tailored to the needs of the individual patient by highly specialist health professionals
- Rehabilitation underpinned by evidence and in line with Royal College of Physicians CRPS clinical guidelines

Our Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) programme was the recipient of the Abbot British Society of Rheumatology Innovations in Rheumatology award in 2005.
HOW CAN WE HELP?
We can provide appropriate diagnosis and management of CRPS, offering a rehabilitation programme tailored to the individual needs of the person. We are highly experienced in rehabilitating people with CRPS.

WHAT DO WE OFFER?
Our service is evidence based and offered on an inpatient and outpatient basis and includes:

- Detailed assessment and consultation by a Professor in Pain Sciences and Pain Medicine Consultant
- Outpatient advice for those with local therapy support
- Two week inpatient rehabilitation programme. This consists of working regularly with the therapists on an individual basis towards achieving agreed goals as part of individually tailored rehabilitation
- Thermal imaging and diagnostic support
- Management and education of this complex condition
- Patient centred goal setting
- Expertise and support to local teams in continuing treatment
- Group education sessions about living with CRPS

REFERRALS
We accept referrals locally, nationally or internationally. The CRPS Service is recognised as a national specialist service by NHS England. Any patient aged 18 years or over with a possible diagnosis of CRPS will be considered via referral from a pain clinic or the patient’s GP. Referrals can be made via Choose and Book or in writing to Professor Candy McCabe.

The Expert Team
We offer a Consultant Nurse and Pain Medicine-led service, comprising:

- Professor Candy McCabe (Nurse Consultant)
- Health Psychologist
- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Clinical Research Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist
- Secretary/ Administrator
- Clinical Measurement Personnel
RESEARCH
Research is an integral part of our service. We have a wide range of projects aimed at gaining a better understanding of this complex condition. Patients will be invited to complete questionnaires to assess various aspects of their condition, how it affects their lives and the impact of treatments.

Our specialist areas of interest are the mechanisms behind CRPS, the patient’s experience of living with the condition and novel therapeutic interventions. We have pioneered the use of a new therapy in CRPS (Mirror Visual Feedback) which aids some people to reduce their pain whilst exercising their affected limb. We are supported by an in-house clinical measurement laboratory which enables assessment of autonomic responses to interventions and altered condition states.

Key published research includes:

Moule P, Lewis JS, McCabe CS. Designing and Delivering an Educational Package to Meet the Needs of Primary Care Health Professionals in the Diagnosis and Management of those with Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. 2013; doi 10.1002/msc.1057


For further information about our Complex Regional Pain Syndrome service and research, or for referral advice please contact Professor Candy McCabe, Consultant Nurse, on 01225 473462 or email crps@rnhrd.nhs.uk

We value your feedback. Your comments, suggestions, praise and complaints will help us to improve the standard of our services. Please contact PALS to feedback your views on the hospital. Tel: 01225 473424 or email PALS@rnhrd.nhs.uk