



# Pain Research Institute

*This is the Pain Research Institute newsletter, the purpose of which is to keep researchers and clinicians informed of the current research going on in the institute. We hope this will enable clinicians to identify areas of research that they may be interested in whilst keeping informed about studies opening to recruitment as they may have pain patients they wish to refer.*

## Fibromyalgia Guidelines Update

Dr Chris Barker & Dr Andreas Goebel have been commissioned by the Royal College of Physicians to produce a Diagnostic Guideline on Fibromyalgia Syndrome to include recognition, diagnosis information. The first meeting of the national group was held in January 2020 and was supported by staff & patients of the Walton Centre amongst 8 others from throughout the UK. The next stage was for the participants of the surgical section to meet and we now expect the guidelines to be published by spring.

## Volunteers Needed for APIF Study

Can you help? We need 30 healthy volunteers between the ages of 30-65 to participate in our Fibromyalgia study (APIF).

Volunteers can be reimbursed £30 for their travel & time

Full information can be given on request please contact Hayley McCullough for an information pack

Dr. Andreas Goebel, Reader in Pain Medicine & Director of the PRI



Francis McGlone, Professor in Neuroscience, School of Natural Sciences & Psychology, Liverpool John Moores University



Dr. Bernhard Frank, Consultant in Pain Medicine and Anaesthesia  
Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust



Selina Johnson, Clinical Research Fellow



Manohar Lal Sharma, Consultant in Pain Medicine, Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust



Andy Marshall, Senior Lecturer UOL & Consultant in Pain Medicine, Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust



Uazman Alam, senior Clinical Lecturer in Diabetes & Endocrinology



Francis O'Neill, Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant in Oral Surgery



Helen Poole, Reader in Applied Health Psychology, Liverpool John Moores University



Serena Sensi, Research Technician at the Rheumatology Laboratory, University Hospital Aintree



Hannah Twiddy, Specialist Clinical Psychologist & Research Lead for Pain Management Programmes



Hayley McCullough, PRI Administrator





Our recent work led by researchers from the University of Bath, in collaboration with the Pain Research Institute in Liverpool, has been published in the current issue of PAIN ([https://journals.lww.com/pain/Fulltext/2021/02000/Prism\\_adaptation\\_treatment\\_for\\_upper\\_limb\\_complex.14.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/pain/Fulltext/2021/02000/Prism_adaptation_treatment_for_upper_limb_complex.14.aspx)). Earlier studies found that people with CRPS can have reduced attention to their painful limb and side of the environment where it is normally located. These changes in attention seem to be related to the severity of pain. We investigated whether sensory-motor adaptation treatment, known to improve attention in other clinical populations, can reduce CRPS symptoms.

Although preliminary studies suggested that this intervention can have therapeutic effects in CRPS, they involved only a few patients, and lacked control measures that are important for ruling out other explanations for pain relief. In this first randomised controlled trial of sensory-motor adaptation treatment, 49 people with CRPS received two weeks of either the real treatment, or a similar control treatment, and their symptoms were monitored for 7.5 months.

**We found no differences between the effects of sensory-motor adaptation treatment and the control treatment on pain or other CRPS symptoms.** The treatment also did not change how much attention participants paid to their body and the environment. We did see an overall reduction in CRPs symptoms, regardless of which treatment the participants did, suggesting that it could be due to the general benefits of regularly moving the painful arm.

We also found that having better use of the painful hand, less pain and swelling, and being better able to recognise images of hands at the beginning of the study, could predict greater reductions in symptoms over time. In conclusion, sensory-motor adaptation is not an effective treatment for CRPS. Although this important finding is not the one we hoped for, now researchers and clinicians can focus on other therapies. For instance, our results suggest that improving movement of the painful limb might help to relieve CRPS.

The lead author, Monika Halicka, conducted this clinical trial during her PhD at the University of Bath (Centre for Pain Research), in collaboration with Hayley McCullough and Andreas Goebel (PRI), Leila Heelas (Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust), and Axel Vitterso (University of Bath). This work has been supported by a grant from the Regional Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association awarded to Janet Bultitude and Michael Proulx (University of Bath).

Monika is currently working at the University of Liverpool together with Chris Brown and collaborators at the Walton Centre and Liverpool Reviews and Implementation Group. Their translational research aims to improve prognosis of chronic pain outcomes. Monika focuses on identifying and modelling the predictors of spinal surgery outcomes for back pain, based on the literature and available clinical data. To improve the ability to predict treatment outcomes, she is also developing novel psycho-physiological markers of pain chronicity and testing the feasibility and acceptability of their clinical use.



## Patient & Public Involvement

PPI has always been important to us at PRI. We have been holding regular PPI groups for over 10 years and have even won a University award for our PPI involvements.

For example, the FMS PPI group – together with Dr Andreas Goebel and Dr Charlotte Krahé – has recently put together a list of perceived barriers and facilitators to taking part in randomised controlled trials. This list is informing (work ongoing) a working protocol on ways to engage people living with fibromyalgia in research and ensure that people have a good experience of taking part in studies.

We currently have 2 PPI programmes for [CRPS](#) & [Fibromyalgia](#)

Our CRPS patient day involves inviting patients from the Walton Centre along for an afternoon of presentations and conversation on all things CRPS. This day gives the patients the opportunity to learn about the new and upcoming research into CRPS as well as meeting CRPS specialists and other people who also have the condition.

We also ask for and value the feedback we receive from this patient day, both with regards to the CRPS clinical service and with regards to research projects

Our most recent CRPS patient day took place virtually on 29th January 2021 & you can view the programme & the minutes document taken from the group discussion section of event where patients were asked to exchange their experiences on how the Covid-19 situation/lockdown has affected them and their CRPS on the PRI website



## PRI Spotlight

We have begun to promote a spotlight section on our webpage to introduce and shine some praise and light on our researchers/collaborators with whom we are currently working with to conduct research into the causes and best treatments of chronic pain. Our current spotlight is on Dr Richard Berwick (left) who is at present working on the APIF study. Dr Berwick's biography can be read on the PRI website

If anybody has anything to add to the PRI newsletter then please contact [Hayley.McCullough@Liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Hayley.McCullough@Liverpool.ac.uk)



## Research Studies... a few to mention

- Investigating Diabetic Neuropathy During Initiation of Intensive Glycaemic Control
- The Utility of Non-Invasive Ocular Imaging in Diabetic Foot Disease
- A Multicentre, double-blind, centre-stratified multi-period crossover trial to evaluate the efficiency of the Optimal Pathway for Treating neuropathic pain in Diabetes Mellitus (OPTION-DM)
- **Pain Relief Foundation Studentship**-A study looking into validity of confocal corneal microscopy in patients with painful chemotherapy induced and idiopathic small fibre neuropathy.

**For more information on all of the above studies please contact the Principal Investigator on [Ualam@Liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:Ualam@Liverpool.ac.uk)**

- **Serum IgG autoantibodies in patients with Fibromyalgia**-We require 100 patients with a diagnoses of FMS (>1year), without other conditions, we will be collecting blood to be used in laboratory experiments. Principal investigator at [andreasgoebel@rocketmail.com](mailto:andreasgoebel@rocketmail.com)
- **A qualitative study into the experience and outcomes of those attending a specialist facial pain management programme**-Three focus groups have been carried out exploring the experiences of services users attending a specialist facial pain management programme. These have been transcribed and are being analysed by the research group. This is ongoing.
- **Doctorate Clinical Psychology trainee project**- Understanding Perceptions around Forming & Maintaining Intimate Relationships for Women and Chronic Pelvic Pain . Principal Investigator [Hannah.Twiddy@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk](mailto:Hannah.Twiddy@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk)
- **Doctorate Clinical Psychology trainee project**- How do people with fibromyalgia relate to their romantic partners? A qualitative study' Principal Investigator [Sean.Harris@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk](mailto:Sean.Harris@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk)
- A study for long term benefit of Spinal Cord Stimulator –Principal Investigator [Bernhard.frank@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk](mailto:Bernhard.frank@thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk)



### An invitation to participate in research

Exploring the experiences of ethnic minorities with long-term pain



#### WHO CAN TAKE PART?

- If you suffer with muscular or skeletal pain in any of your limbs or joints.
- You consider yourself to be from a culturally diverse descent.
- You live in Greater London.

#### WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

- You will be screened for eligibility
- Your socio-demographic data will be collected.
- You will then be invited for an in-depth one-to-one interview with the researcher.

If you would like to know more, or interested to take part, please contact:

Dr Dana Maki (Chief Investigator) Email: [dana.maki@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:dana.maki@brunel.ac.uk)  
Miss Preet Singh (Research Assistant) Email: [1603410@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:1603410@brunel.ac.uk)

This study has been reviewed and approved by the College of Health and Life Sciences Research Ethics Committee, at Brunel University London.

## Brunel University London Research

Researchers at Brunel University are inviting those with muscular or skeletal pain in any limbs or joints to participate in a study to explore the experiences of ethnic minorities with long term pain.

Please contact the investigators to learn more on eligibility etc

