

22 February 2010

## Media Release

### **New expert to lead specialist service for chronic rheumatological condition**

The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS Foundation Trust, also known as the Min, is delighted to welcome Consultant Rheumatologist Dr Raj Sengupta, who joins the Trust to lead its national specialist Ankylosing Spondylitis service.

Ankylosing Spondylitis, or AS, is a chronic inflammatory spinal condition which affects about 1 in 200 people in this country.

Raj will lead the specialist AS team at the RNHRD in the diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of people with this complex condition.

People who suffer with AS experience spinal inflammation which causes pain and stiffness and can lead to significant disability. AS predominantly affects young people, with onset being in late teens and twenties.

The RNHRD has a long tradition of providing excellent clinical care for people with AS both locally and nationally, and provides an AS rehabilitation course run by a multi-disciplinary team of experts.

Raj said:

“I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with the AS team to build on the high quality care already provided, and ensure the delivery of a service that makes a positive difference to those people who need our help in the management of this condition.”

Alongside the physical consequences of this condition AS can have a social, functional and an economic impact on a person’s life.

He went on to say:

“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 a persons outcomes. We aim to help people to make adjustments which enable them to cope with everyday life and provide them with the resources to optimize their health.”

Dr Tim Jenkinson, Medical Director at the RNHRD welcomed Raj to the team.

“We are extremely pleased to have Raj on board, this is great news for the Trust and for those people who use our AS service.”

ENDS

Please note: A patient case study is available on request.

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**Notes for Editors:**

- Dr Sengupta has experience in identifying AS patients, in line with NICE guidance, who will benefit from Anti-TNF, and in managing these patients throughout their treatment.
- The Min has an established history of research in rheumatic diseases. We look after a large group of patients with AS and there is research planned to help further improve the care provided for these patients.
- The RNHRD NHS FT is a national specialist rehabilitation and rheumatology hospital based in bath. Offering services to adults, children and young peoples the Trust has expertise in general and complex:
  - Rheumatological and musculoskeletal conditions
  - Neurological Rehabilitation
  - Chronic Pain Management
  - Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME
  - [www.rnhrd.nhs.uk](http://www.rnhrd.nhs.uk)