

30th May 2013

## Press Release

### **ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS IN THE SPOTLIGHT AS RNHRD PROVIDES EXPERTISE AT PATIENT AND GP DAY**

Clinicians from The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS Foundation Trust (RNHRD) will be amongst those specialists providing advice at an upcoming 'Meet the Professionals' event focusing on the inflammatory arthritis condition Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS).

AS is a chronic, inflammatory spinal condition which affects about one in 200 people in this country. Spinal inflammation causes pain and stiffness and if left untreated can cause a fixed, stooped posture.

The 'Meet the Professionals' event on Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at Rylands Farm in Sherborne, Dorset will provide GP's, as well as those living with AS, access to key specialists in the field.

Raj Sengupta, Consultant Rheumatologist at the RNHRD and lead consultant for Ankylosing Spondylitis will be amongst those providing expertise on the day, he says: "AS can be difficult to diagnose, there is not one simple test. By the time a patient has been referred to us for diagnosis or treatment at the RNHRD it may be as long as ten years from the onset of their symptoms. This event is an opportunity to help professionals to further develop their skills in identifying the symptoms of inflammatory back pain to ensure AS can be picked up sooner and patients can get the care they require."

Dr Sengupta continues: "The day will also allow those with AS to explore different options to enable them to manage and live with their condition. There is currently no cure for AS but we know that along with medication, appropriate exercise is crucial to managing the condition."

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The RNHRD, known locally as the 'Min' provides one of the few specialist AS rehabilitation courses in the country. Patients with AS can attend a two week residential course, designed to promote self-management and provide patients with the resources to optimise their health.

At the Rylands Farm site on the day there will be demonstrations of appropriate exercise and complementary therapies. As well as clinicians from the Bath based RNHRD, attendees will include the National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society (NASS), pharmacists, occupational therapists and nutritionists.

The event is open to all GP's as well as those with AS. If you would like to attend please contact [james@futereroots.net](mailto:james@futereroots.net) or telephone 01963 210703.

GPs attending the event will qualify for CPD credits (accredited by the Bath General Practice Education and Research Trust).

## Ends

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## Notes to Editors

- The RNHRD NHS FT is a national specialist rehabilitation and rheumatology hospital based in Bath. Offering services to adults, children and young people, the trust has expertise in general and complex:
  - Rheumatological and musculoskeletal conditions
  - Chronic pain management
  - Fatigue Management (CFS/ME and cancer survivorship fatigue)
  - [www.rnhrd.nhs.uk](http://www.rnhrd.nhs.uk)
- For more information about AS services at the RNHRD see <http://www.rnhrd.nhs.uk/page/64>
- The event is taking place at: Future Roots, Rylands Farm, Boyshill Drove, Holnest, Sherborne, Dorset, DTP 5PS.
- Future Roots is a social enterprise using the therapeutic values of farming and the countryside to support those aged five to 95 [www.futereroots.net](http://www.futereroots.net)
- For more information about NASS see [www.nass.co.uk](http://www.nass.co.uk)