

2nd March 2010

Media Release

£164,000 awarded for new research into the treatment of a chronic childhood condition

A research study looking into interventions and treatment options for a chronic childhood condition has been awarded funding of £164,000 by the Linbury Trust and the Ashden Trust.

The funding has been awarded to a research team led by Dr Esther Crawley, Consultant Paediatrician at the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases NHS Foundation Trust, also known as the Min, and Senior Lecturer at the University of Bristol.

Esther and her team will carry out a pilot project to investigate whether it is possible to look at two different approaches to the intervention and treatment of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME (CFS/ME) in Children.

CFS/ME in children is a relatively common and potentially serious condition affecting over one per cent of children across the UK. Over 50 per cent of affected children are bed bound at some stage of their illness and have an average time off school of one academic year.

Despite this there is a limited evidence-base for treatment for children with CFS/ME. This research also incorporates the first study on health economic cost of this condition in children.

Dr Esther Crawley said:

“We are delighted to have been awarded this research grant. CFS/ME can have a profound impact on a child’s life. We hope that our research will enable us to understand more about this condition and how we can help those children who suffer with it.”

The team will carry out a pilot project to investigate how to recruit to a randomised controlled trial looking at the Phil Parker Lightning Process® and specialist medical care. This will be the first study of its kind in this area, and the team hopes to establish a basis for a larger scale multicentre research project.

The specialist Paediatric CFS/ME service at the Min is the largest regional paediatric CFS/ME clinical service in the UK, and also provides services nationally. The team currently provides assessment and treatment for over 200 children from across the UK and Western Europe each year. Approximately ten per cent of the children referred into the service are housebound and are assessed at home.

The Phil Parker Lightning Process® is an intervention that is used for a variety of conditions including CFS/ME and has been developed from osteopathy, coaching and neuro-linguistic programming. It is a three-day training programme run by registered practitioners and designed to teach individuals a new set of techniques for improving life and health.

Phil Parker, designer of the Lightning Process said:

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to collaborate on this exciting and groundbreaking research with Dr Crawley and her team. It is vitally important that all interventions that could assist children with CFS/ME to return to school and improve their health are explored. We hope that this study is successful and leads to further research collaborations between the Lightning Process and specialist teams like Esther’s.”

The study will involve in depth interviews with the patients and their parents, and the primary outcome measure will be school attendance after six-months. It is hoped that over 90 children aged between eight and 18 and their families will be involved in the study. They will be recruited after assessment by the specialist team at the Min.

The study will begin in September 2010.

ENDS

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Notes for 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
 - Neurological rehabilitation
 - Chronic pain management
 - Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME
 - www.rnhrd.nhs.uk
- Phil Parker Lightning Process® <http://www.lightningprocess.com>
- Linbury Trust: <http://www.linburytrust.org.uk/>
- Ashden Trust: <http://www.ashdentrust.org.uk/>
- The University of Bristol is internationally distinguished and is ranked among the leaders in UK higher education. Research-intensive, with an international reputation for quality and innovation, the University has 17,000 students from over 100 countries, together with more than 5,500 staff. For further information, see www.bris.ac.uk