

Physiotherapy Education Modules

Axial Spondyloarthritis (ax-SpA)

Sue Gurden

ABUHB



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

Introduction

- Ankylosing Spondylitis has been notoriously difficult to diagnose average 8-10 years from symptom onset (usually 2nd to 3rd decade) to a diagnosis by a Rheumatologist
- Diagnostic (x-ray) criteria too limiting
- Pharmacological and non pharmacological interventions less effective at this stage
- Development of new disease classification clarifying the spectrum of disease (Axial Spondyloarthritis) and new diagnostic algorithms have broadened the disease category allowing for earlier recognition and treatment.

Reasoning

- Audit of our own service had shown no improvement to diagnostic delay despite increased communication with GP's and patients
- With industry sponsorship a GP education dvd was designed and rolled out to local GP's This now available as a CPD module

ADDRESS

Physiotherapists are often the first contact with a young person struggling with chronic LBP, therefore it is imperative that ease of access to good education is readily available.

Fighting for a diagnosis Jane Martindale 2014

Knew they
needed further
investigations

Not being
believed

Had to 'push' to
get something
done

Impact on psychological
well being

Negativity and reluctance of
doctors with investigations
and referrals

Had to persist and 'fight' 'banging on the door'

Being adrift

```
graph TD; A[Being adrift] --> B[Relief]; B --> C[Reflection and understanding of symptoms]; B --> D[Health professionals believed them at last]; B --> E[Sense of positivity and empowerment]; B --> F[Something that they could do to help themselves]
```

Relief

Reflection and
understanding of
symptoms

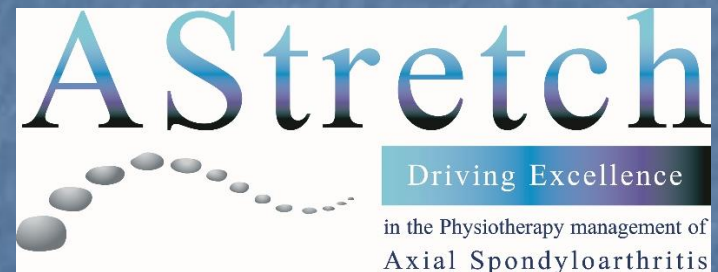
Health professionals
believed them at last

Sense of positivity and
empowerment

Something that they
could do to help
themselves

Collaborative Network

- **Group of senior physiotherapist who meet and communicate regularly, to provide co-ordinated approach to the planning and delivery of education and support to physiotherapists working with people who have Axial Spondyloarthritis (AxSpA) and Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS).**
- There is a close collaboration with the National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society (NASS) who commissioned and sort funding for this work.



How we approached the task

- Subcommittee
- Initial meeting to plan content before each module
- Editing and fine tuning electronically and via teleconference.
- Layout, illustration and publishing assistance by medical communications company

Differentiating Inflammatory and Mechanical Back Pain

Challenge your decision making

■ **Module 1**

Differentiating inflammatory and mechanical back pain, compares the key features of mechanical and inflammatory back pain and contains guidance and information to assist in distinguishing inflammatory back pain in patients. It provides the reader with clear information on appropriate questioning with illustrated algorithms to facilitate the process and suggested actions and referral pathways

What is Axial Spondyloarthritis?

How does it apply to physiotherapists?

■ **Module 2**

This module provides an overview of the epidemiology, symptoms and classification of axial spondyloarthritis (SpA), and highlights the clinical features that you should look for to identify potential patients. It describes a spectrum of disease including ankylosing spondylitis (AS) and non-radiographic axial SpA (nr-axSpA). Also the classification and possible progressive course of the disease, stressing the importance of early referral to Rheumatology Services.

Assessing the Signs, Symptoms, and Clinical Manifestations of Axial SpA

Enhance your patient examination skills

A detailed look at the clinical features, plus laboratory and imaging findings, of axial spondyloarthritis (SpA), as defined by the Assessment of SpondyloArthritis international Society (ASAS)* criteria, and rationales for their use.

Being able to identify the features of axial SpA during patient assessments, understand co-morbidities and extra articular manifestations.

The Treatment of Axial Spondyloarthritis

Best practice for the management of patients

■ Module 4

This module provides an overview of the goals of treatment in patients with axSpA and the range of treatments available, including pharmacological and non-pharmacological options. Practical advice and details are provided on the role of the physiotherapist in monitoring, managing, and supporting patients with axSpA.

Utilisation

- The modules were first published 2012 and revised 2015
- Initially distributed in booklet forms at conferences and educational events (AStretch, CSP, BSR)
- Available electronically

ADDRESS

- Used as a basis for referrer education “ Back Pain Seminars (2012-2014)
- Departmental source for students all physiotherapy grades and genres as a resource and teaching aid
- Conference presentations
- Back in Focus initiative

Rheumatology 2014

29 April-1 May | Liverpool, UK

Interactive clinical reasoning around the recognition of inflammatory back pain

Karl Gaffney, Sue Gurden, Claire Harris, Claire Jeffries, Jane Martindale

Presenter Disclosure Information:

- The speakers have no conflicts of interest
- This project has been supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Abbvie
- Editorial support by dna medical communications
- Videos kindly supported by NASS

Back in Focus

Fighting the whole of
axial spondyloarthritis



<http://www.axialspabackinfocus.co.uk/>

- Back in Focus was initially launched in 2012 by AbbVie as a series of small educational initiatives for healthcare professionals involved in the care of axial SpA patients. Since then the programme has grown to include:
- Larger national meetings and interactive case study based MRI training meetings (RCP accredited)
- An expert Steering Committee to provide guidance, develop materials and lead the 'Back in Focus' events and meetings
- Materials to support other members of the MDT such as nurses, physiotherapist and radiologists
- Resources to support education of primary care physicians to improve appropriate referral of axial SpA patients

Recommendations

- "Thank you to the authors of this versatile teaching and learning tool.

The publication in print and electronic formats allows ease of access to all health professionals. It has provided us with much needed clear and concise information to facilitate understanding, recognition and the impact of this condition. Subsequently, the planning of multi-professional protocols and treatment pathways which support the management of Axial Spondyloarthritis."

Conclusions

- This has been an ideal and rewarding opportunity to address a need in the facilitation of learning and participation of physiotherapists in the management of people with Axial Spondyloarthritis.
- This condition primarily affects young people at a time when they are developing socially and potentially contributing to society as a whole
- Our assistance in maintaining the status quo is invaluable to the patient and society as a whole

Acknowledgements

- Co-authors: Claire Harris, Claire Jeffries, Jane Martindale.
- Staff at DNA medical for editing assistance, illustrations publication and printing.
- NASS and abbvie for sponsorship and support
- The AStretch committee.
- My local managers at ABUHB: Sam Howarth Booth, Nikki Cook and Alan Sweeny