

Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS)

Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) or Axial Spondyloarthritis is an inflammatory arthritis of the back and spine which can occur with or without inflammation in other joints. In AS, symptoms typically first occur in the early twenties, although average diagnosis lags 10 years behind the onset of symptoms. Men are affected three times more commonly than women. Back pain is common in the general population but back pain of more than 3 months duration is inflammatory if it fulfils 4 out of the following 5 criteria:

- Age at onset less than 40 years
- Onset starts gradually
- Improvement with exercise
- No improvement with rest
- Pain at night (with improvement on getting up)

AS is related to some other types of arthritis such as psoriatic arthritis, and other conditions such as crohns disease and ulcerative colitis. It is strongly associated with a type of eye inflammation called iritis or uveitis.

Treatment

AS responds well to physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, daily stretching exercises and medicines including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and newer biologic therapies. This will form part of the treatment following diagnosis in the rheumatology clinic.

Further information is available at:

www.sheffieldachesandpains.com (please refer to joint pain section)

The National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society (NASS):

Web site: www.nass.co.uk

Postal address:
172 King Street
Hammersmith
W6 0QU

NSS Helpline: 020 8741 1515

NASS email: admin@nass.co.uk