

**Date 19.02.19**

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## Media Release

# RNHRD Consultant leading international research into Raynaud's disease

A consultant rheumatologist from the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) in Bath is among an international team that's been awarded a \$1.2 million grant to research Raynaud's phenomenon – a common circulation disorder that leads to discolouration, pain, numbness and impaired function of the fingers.

Dr John Pauling, who leads the Scleroderma Clinical Trials Consortium Vascular Working Group, is collaborating with US researchers from Baltimore and Pittsburgh Universities to investigate ways of improving the assessment of Raynaud's, using funding obtained from the US Department of Defence.

He said: "I'm very excited to be part of this important project. The grant will allow us to better understand Raynaud's and develop new tools for assessing and diagnosing the disease."

Raynaud's phenomenon is common but many go undiagnosed or do not feel it requires medical attention. For many people, it is intrusive but doesn't cause any severe problems. However, for a minority of people affected by Raynaud's, it can be a sign of a more serious condition such as systemic sclerosis (also known as scleroderma), a rare autoimmune disease that results in damage to the blood vessels and excessive scar tissue formation in the skin and internal organs.

February is Raynaud's Awareness Month and Scleroderma & Raynaud's UK (SRUK) are asking people to take a quick and simple online test if they suffer from any of the following symptoms:

- Cold fingers and toes
- Colour changes in your skin in response to changes in temperature or stress
- Colour changes in the affected area from white, to blue and then red
- Numbness, tingling or pain in the affected area
- Stinging or throbbing pain upon warming or stress relief

Sue Farrington, SRUK Chief Executive said: "We worked with Dr John Pauling on the online test, bringing together clinical insight and patient need. There is huge benefit to patient organisations



working collaboratively with clinicians and researchers. We hope with our test people can self-manage the condition better, seek treatment where necessary but, above all, know that they are not alone.”

Dr Pauling, who leads the Raynaud’s and Scleroderma service at the RNHRD, said: “Our services at the RNHRD help with diagnosis, treatment and management of Raynaud’s. We hold dedicated clinics for education, support, advice and counselling. We work closely with SRUK and are one of the few rheumatology services nationally to provide specialist diagnostic techniques such as nailfold capillaroscopy, which help accurately identify different forms of Raynaud’s. Nailfold capillaroscopy is a simple, and safe test that looks at the capillaries on the nailbed and can inform doctors on the likely cause of Raynaud’s.

“We encourage GPs to refer patients to our service for assessment, particularly if they develop Raynaud’s symptoms after the age of 30, are male or have developed other new problems such as heartburn, puffiness of the fingers or the development of sores on the fingers.

“I would encourage anyone interested to learn more about Raynaud’s or scleroderma, or about the services available in their area, to visit the SRUK website which is a fantastic source of support and information for patients and families affected by these conditions.”

To take the SRUK test or to find more information on the signs, symptoms and ways of managing Raynaud’s, visit [www.sruk.co.uk](http://www.sruk.co.uk)

## Ends

### Notes to Editor:

- The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust provides acute treatment and care for a catchment population of around 500,000 people in Bath, and the surrounding towns and villages in North East Somerset and Western Wiltshire. The hospital provides healthcare to the population served by four Clinical Commissioning Groups: Bath & North East Somerset CCG, Wiltshire CCG, Somerset CCG and South Gloucestershire CCG.
- The Trust provides 759 beds and a comprehensive range of acute services including medicine and surgery, services for women and children, accident and emergency services, and diagnostic and clinical support services.
- In 2015 The Royal United Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust acquired the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD) NHS Foundation Trust. The RNHRD treats patients from across the country offering services in rheumatology, chronic pain and chronic fatigue syndrome/ME, cancer related fatigue and fatigue linked to other long term conditions such as multiple sclerosis.
- The RUH is changing - we have an exciting programme of redevelopment underway transforming our site and further improving the services we provide. The Trust is now building a purpose-built RNHRD and Therapies Centre and working towards new Dyson Cancer Centre. For more details visit: [www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit\\_for\\_the\\_future](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk/about/fit_for_the_future)
- For more information about the Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust visit: [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

