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Communications Department
Tel: 01225 826282

Media Release

Ruh-tr.communicationteam@nhs.net
www.ruh.nhs.uk

RUH staff win Patients' Choice Awards

A Bath RUH Consultant Rheumatologist and a team of arthritis specialists are to receive two Patients' Choice Awards in recognition of their work to help patients cope with their condition.

Voted by patients, the National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society (NASS) awards recognise health care professionals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to help people with the condition. Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS), is a form of inflammatory arthritis which mainly affects the spine.

Lead Consultant Dr Raj Sengupta and the specialist AS team are based at the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases (RNHRD), locally known as 'The Min'. The hospital provides a specialist service for patients with AS, a painful, progressive, long-term condition which can have a major impact on the lives of those who have it and those around them.

Dr Raj Sengupta was voted to receive the 'Best care provided by a rheumatologist' award, as patients felt that not only was he an expert in AS, but also took the time to listen and understand their concerns, going 'the extra mile' to help. Dr Raj Sengupta said:

"I'm delighted to have been selected for the award and it is a fantastic accolade for the AS team here who work extremely hard to deliver a high quality service."

Comments by Dr Sengupta's patients' include "He takes the time to listen, to help me understand the condition"; "He's down to earth and easy to talk to which makes you feel you can open up.>"; "He always listens carefully and acts accordingly" and "He is a very positive and indispensable doctor."

The RNHRD Specialist AS Team will receive the award 'Excellence in AS Care'. They were nominated by patients for both the care they provide in clinics and for their work on the excellent and unique AS Rehabilitation Course.

Patient comments included "An exceptional team with excellent knowledge about my disease. The whole team care and the AS course gave me what I needed to cope with the road ahead."

Debbie Cook, NASS Chief Executive said:

"People with AS from all over the country have told me how wonderful the AS Course at the RNHRD, Bath is and how much the team there have helped them cope with their condition. This was echoed in the Patients' Choice Awards nominations. It is great to be able to formally recognise the wonderful work of Dr Sengupta and his team".

The awards will be presented to Dr Sengupta and the Specialist AS Team at the NASS award ceremony on 2 November 2016 at the Houses of Parliament.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

About RNHRD services

The RNHRD has a long tradition of providing excellent clinical care for AS patients locally and nationally. We aim to help with all aspects of AS, from early diagnosis to treatment with our AS course and the optimisation of drug treatments.

The RNHRD is a national specialist rehabilitation and rheumatology hospital based in Bath and was acquired by the Royal United Hospital, Bath back in February 2015. It offers services to adults, children and young people, and has expertise in general and complex:

- Rheumatological conditions,
- Chronic pain management including Complex Regional Pain Syndrome
- Fatigue Management (CFS/ME and cancer survivorship fatigue).
- The RNHRD has an excellent reputation for research both nationally and internationally. Research informs our treatment programmes and contributes to a better understanding of many of the conditions in which we specialise

The RNHRD offers a Specialist AS rehabilitation course which aims to promote self-management and provide patients with the resources to optimise their health. Patients can be referred to the course by their consultant rheumatologist, or in writing or via Choose and Book by their GP to a rheumatology consultant at the RNHRD to be assessed for their suitability for the course. Further information re: the AS course can be obtained from Belinda Jones, AS Course Administrator, tel 01225 473416, email belindajones@nhs.net.

Dr Raj Sengupta is a Consultant Rheumatologist at The Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, (RNHRD) Bath and The BMI Bath Clinic, Bath.

About Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS)

AS is a form of inflammatory arthritis which mainly affects the spine. Around 200,000 people in the UK have AS, with symptoms tending to first appear during late teens or early twenties. There is no cure for AS, instead anti-inflammatory medication combined with regular physiotherapy and exercise are the cornerstones of treatment.

About NASS

The National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society (NASS) is the only registered charity dedicated to the needs of people affected by ankylosing spondylitis (AS) in the UK.

Since 15 April 1976 NASS has played a crucial role in providing accurate and up to date information allowing people with AS to have a greater understanding of their disease and in turn, make more informed choices in the management of their symptoms. We do this by:

- Responding to daily Helpline requests for advice and information by telephone, email and letter on a wide range of topics including associated diseases, medication, practical aids, employment, insurance, benefits and more;
- Producing a variety of resources including patient guides, fact sheets, audio podcasts, exercise apps, exercise DVDs and materials for people with AS and healthcare professionals;
- Providing regular supervised hydrotherapy and physiotherapy sessions through a network of volunteer branches around the UK;
- Keeping people up to date with the latest developments in effective treatment of the disease via the website, email alerts and our bi-annual newsletter for members and health professionals;

- Acting as advocate for people with AS working alongside the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), health service providers and policy makers in raising the profile of AS and, in particular, the need for earlier diagnosis and access to appropriate care; and
- Actively encouraging participation into research into the cause, genetics, treatment and management of the disease.

This year's NASS awards also marks the 40th anniversary of NASS by recognising good practice around the UK. Find out more about NASS at our website: <http://www.nass.co.uk/>

For more information about the Patient Choice Awards please contact Jill Hamilton on 07875 107 747 or jill@nass.co.uk.