

Southern Derbyshire Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Service

Derby Hospitals 
NHS Foundation Trust

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1 Occupational Therapist and Service Manager

2. Consultant/Professor in Rehabilitation Medicine

3. Occupational Therapist

4 Physiotherapist

5. Clinical Network Co-ordinator

6. General Practitioner

Background and development Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS, or 'ME') is a significant source of ill health and disability in people of working age. A Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine with an interest in medically unexplained disability established a CFS clinic jointly with a specialist nurse* in 2002. Following a report to the Chief Medical Officer**, an East Midlands Network and a Southern Derbyshire service were funded from 2005.

Description The team is co-ordinated by an OT-trained clinician-manager and includes a Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine, a GP with a Special Interest, a part-time OT and additional physiotherapy sessions. A triage process assigns about two thirds of referrals directly to the multidisciplinary team, which provides a defined programme either one-to-one or in groups.



Evaluation Data from the first 66 12-month outcomes have been analysed (n=47, response rate 71%). There were statistically significant reductions in symptomatic measures including fatigue, sleepiness and depression, and a trend for improvement in employment status.

Innovation Services for people with CFS in the UK have often been provided by Psychiatry. Rehabilitation Medicine has rarely been involved to date, but is a more appropriate platform for services both because individuals with CFS are often wary of psychiatric services and because Rehabilitation Medicine supplies a practical, goal-orientated ethos together with routine linkages to therapy, social and employment services.

Implications The medical and generic skills of Rehabilitation Medicine have provided a useful lead for this service. The triage process and also the outcome measure dataset employed here could be adapted for use in other rehabilitation services.

NOTES: *Alison Smith, Rehabilitation Nurse Specialist

**Report of the CFS/ME Independent Working Group, DoH 2002



British Society of
Rehabilitation Medicine,
Meeting May 22 2007