

## Money for Min children's study

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A project looking into a chronic childhood condition has been given a £164,000 boost.

A team at the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases has been given the money by the Linbury and Ashden Charitable Trusts for its research into chronic fatigue syndrome in children.

Led by consultant paediatrician Dr Esther Crawley, the project looks at the treatment of children with the condition, and how to help them.

They will now test whether a ground-breaking system championed by broadcaster Esther Rantzen and former rugby player Austin Healey works for children.

Dr Crawley said: "We are delighted to have been awarded this research grant.

"CFS can have a profound impact on a child's life.

"We hope that our research will enable us to understand more about this condition and how we can help those children who suffer with it."

CFS affects more than 250,000 people in the UK, and leaves sufferers feeling constantly tired with no energy.

The condition affects three times more women than men, and is most common in younger people.

More than 50 per cent of affected children are bedbound at some stage of their illness, and have an average time off school of one academic year.

Despite this, there is a limited amount of treatment available.

The team at the hospital - popularly known as The Min - provides assessment and treatment for more than 200 children each year.

Around 10 per cent of the children referred to the service are housebound and are assessed at home.

The team will be carrying out a three-day trial using the Phil Parker Lightning Process, which is designed to teach people a new set of techniques for improving life and health.

The system is derived from osteopathy, neuro-linguistic programming and life coaching.

Its creator, osteopath Phil Parker said: "We are thrilled to have the opportunity to collaborate on this exciting and groundbreaking research with Dr Crawley and her team.

"It is vitally important that all interventions that could assist children with CFS/ME to return to school and improve their health are explored.

"We hope that this study is successful and leads to further research collaborations between the Lightning Process and specialist teams like this."

The study, which will start in September, will involve interviews with the patients and their parents, and look at their school attendance.

Around 90 children aged between eight and 18 and their families will be involved, and are recruited after assessment by the team.

Meanwhile, an occupational therapist from The Min has won a national prize for her work with people with common pain syndrome.

Sandi Derham has been awarded the arc prize in rheumatology for occupational therapists, from national medical research charity the Arthritis Research Campaign.

It was in recognition of her work with people with muscle pain fibromyalgia.

She will be presented with £1,000 and a silver medal at the British Health Professionals in Rheumatology conference in Birmingham in May.

Mrs Derham won the prize for writing a paper on a multi-disciplinary fibromyalgia coping skills programme at the hospital.

The four-week programme, which is run every month, is popular with patients and has a long waiting list.

It focuses on providing education and exercise for people with fibromyalgia, and involves sessions on goal setting, pacing and hydrotherapy.

Mrs Derham was involved in developing the programme and co-runs it with senior physiotherapist Julie Russell.

The ARC prize is awarded annually by the charity to medical professionals working with patients with arthritis and related conditions.

