

## CANADIAN PAEDIATRIC SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

# Surveillance program studies complex regional pain syndrome in Canadian children and youth

Children and youth experiencing complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) require early diagnosis to minimize suffering, unnecessary medical investigation and the risk of long-term disability, according to the lead investigator on a new Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program study.

Dr. Krista Baerg, a Saskatoon paediatrician, said CRPS is a chronic pain condition that usually affects one limb and typically happens following an injury.

In adults, the incidence rate of CRPS is 5-26 per 100,000 annually. Not much is known about CRPS in children and youth, including the incidence rate.

By targeting both general paediatricians and pain clinics, this study will collect national data on minimum incidence rates, explore triggering factors, presentations of the disorder and time to diagnosis.

Dr. Baerg explained that the pain experienced in CRPS is disproportionate to any triggering factors. Although causes aren't well understood, the pain is related to malfunctions of the peripheral or central nervous systems, and might include abnormal sensory, motor, sudomotor or vasomotor symptoms.

The severity of the pain makes early diagnosis essential, said Dr. Baerg.

"The main presenting feature [of CPRS] is severe pain, but with time, CRPS will result in atrophic changes or disability," she said. "Early and urgent referral to physical therapy is important along with patient education to help prevent longstanding or permanent disability."

CRPS was previously known as Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD) but RSD did not fully describe the condition. When the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) published the Budapest Criteria in 2004, both the name and the clinical diagnostic criteria changed.

Dr. Baerg says paediatricians should consider CRPS when a patient presents with continuing pain disproportionate to an event such as a twisted ankle or even a fracture or injury. Paediatricians should also consider CRPS when patients present with pain and symptoms such as extreme tenderness, allodynia, hyperesthesia, swelling or changes in skin temperature or colour.

The University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board granted ethics approval for this study.

To see the full diagnostic criteria for CPRS, visit [www.iasp-pain.org](http://www.iasp-pain.org).

To learn more about this and other CPSP studies, visit [www.cpsp.ca/](http://www.cpsp.ca/).



## 8<sup>th</sup> International Meeting on Indigenous Child Health

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Abstract submission deadline: **November 6, 2018**

More information: [www.cpsp.ca/en/imich](http://www.cpsp.ca/en/imich)

