

Recent RSDSA-funded Research

The Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association (RSDSA) is committed to encouraging research into the cause and cure of CRPS. Since 1992, RSDSA has funded \$1,255,740 in fellowships and grants. In 2008, we funded \$65,896 in grants.

Some RSDSA-funded research projects include:

2008-2009 Rachel Tobias Young Pain Research Investigator Award

Jenny Lewis, PhD, MSc, Dip COT, is the recipient of the 2008-2009 Tobias Young Investigator Research Award. Dr. Lewis will be investigating the relationship between body perception disturbances and cortical representation of the affected limb in complex regional pain syndrome. This research is important in two key respects. First, it aims to improve our understanding of CRPS. Objective evidence of an association between the brain's representation of the CRPS limb and disturbances in body perception may provide valuable insights into the central mechanisms that are responsible for altered thoughts and feelings about the affected limb. Second, it may help in treatment. Given that CRPS is known to be resistive to conventional treatments, an improved understanding of body perception mechanisms may identify areas in which rehabilitation interventions could be specifically targeted. In conclusion, a better understanding of this relationship will inform and contribute to improving rehabilitation outcomes for patients with CRPS.

Maternally-inherited mitochondrial DNA sequence variants and CRPS-I

With American RSDHope, RSDSA awarded a \$50,000 research grant to the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles and to Richard Boles, MD, Director, Center for Metabolic and Mitochondrial Disorders at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. Dr. Boles and his team will study maternally-inherited mitochondrial DNA sequence variants and CRPS-I. Their hypothesis is that a brain/nerve energy deficiency that can be caused by maternally inherited changes in the mtDNA code plays an important role in the development of many functional disorders, including CRPS-I. The team will study up to 300 individuals who have been diagnosed with CRPS-I by a physician or other healthcare providers.

Pilot Study on Safety and Efficacy of Noninvasive Transcranial Stimulation to Relieve Neuropathic Pain in Patients with CRPS

Previous research has revealed that pain in CRPS patients is associated with cortical reorganization, ie, pathological changes in the somatotopic organization and excitability of the motor and somatosensory cortex. As studies in patients with CRPS and other symptoms featuring neuropathic pain have shown that reversal of pathological cortical changes back to normal is accompanied by pain relief, modulation of cortical excitability seems to be a promising therapeutic approach to alleviate neuropathic pain. The purpose of the study is to determine the efficacy of a new noninvasive completely painless technique called transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS), to alleviate pain and sensory abnormalities in patients with CRPS.



Working to raise awareness of complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) since 1984.

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