



spotlight on health

Using Technology To Advance Pain Treatment

(NAPSA)—A pioneering new research unit is giving hope to people who suffer from chronic pain.

Medical knowledge of pain is incomplete and reliable data is difficult to produce. Researchers at the new Pain Clinical Research Hub (PCRH)—a unique scientific collaboration between King's College Hospital (KCH), King's College London (KCL) and Pfizer Limited—will use the latest imaging techniques to look inside the brains and nervous systems of people suffering pain, with the aim of discovering new ways to measure pain, establish the efficacy of new treatments and reduce the time it takes to develop these drugs into new medicines.

Long-term pain is now recognized as a significant element in many physical conditions, which causes a considerable adverse effect on the quality of patients' lives. At worst, chronic pain can be disabling; it is not well characterized and has to be studied more thoroughly in order that it can be managed more effectively. By providing new diagnostic tools, the PCRH aims to help those patients currently receiving inadequate pain management, who need new and more effective treatment.

The PCRH will use state-of-the-art technology, including quantitative sensory testing and electrophysiological studies, as well as cutting-edge imaging techniques, particularly functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). These imaging technologies and other clinical techniques have the potential to provide important information on the neural pathways and intensity of the pain experienced by patients.



A new research collaboration may help unlock the secrets of chronic pain.

Until now, researchers have generally relied on patients' individual, and often quite different, impressions of their pain. The work undertaken at the PCRH could provide new, objective measures of central activity during both pain perception and response to treatment. Furthermore, the PCRH wants to provide outstanding care to patients, offering new venues for accurate, reliable and objective treatments of pain.

"The Pain Clinical Research Hub is a vital step forward in developing our understanding of pain, what triggers it, how it is felt physically, and the impact it has on the lives of sufferers and their families," says professor Sally Davies. "The research will result in better pain prevention, treatment and management for the hundreds of thousands of people who live with constant and unremitting pain."

To learn more about PCRH and the management of chronic pain, visit www.pfizer.com.