

Dr Emilija Dubljanin-Raspopović

COMPLEX REGIONAL PAIN SYNDROME (CRPS)

Abstract: Complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) is a pain syndrome in which the pain is accompanied by loss of function and evidence of autonomic dysfunction. In clinical practice it is usually seen as a complication of Colles fracture. The theory that CRPS is a consequence of increased sympathetic activity is challenged, but remains most widely accepted. Three stages of severity have been described. Stage I consists of pain out of proportion to any injury, abnormal sensitivity, swelling, vasomotor and sudomotor changes, and diffuse osteoporosis. Stage II is characterised by persistence of pain and disability with increasing dystrophy. Stage III is marked by skin and subcutaneous tissue atrophy and contractures. CRPS is diagnosed on the basis of its typical clinical picture, radiographic changes of spotty osteopenia, the results obtained on bone scintigraphy, and thermography. Early diagnosis and treatment of reflex sympathetic dystrophy is of enormous importance for prevention of potential devastating long term disability. Treatment consists of analgesic therapy, sympatholytic interventions and physical therapy. Upcoming studies are expected to prove the effects of the variety of treatments available.

Key-words: Complex regional pain syndrome, Colles fracture, diagnosis, therapy