

Patients with chronic fatigue use additional areas of brain when using memory

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(Medical Xpress)—Scientists studying the brain scans of chronic fatigue patients have found they use additional brain regions to do simple tasks requiring attention. This may explain the problems many sufferers have with memory. The findings are just one of several new studies being presented today [22 Apr] at the launch of a new UK-wide research body to advance understanding and treatment into this debilitating condition which affects over 600,000 people in the UK.

The UK CFS/ME Research Collaborative [UK CMRC] is a new initiative led by the country's leading experts in the field to expand medical studies into this complex set of disorders by facilitating greater expertise and improved co-ordination of research activities.

Researchers at the launch will be discussing some of the key issues they

are facing and the areas that are making progress. They will also be explaining some of their thoughts for future research and their latest preliminary findings. These include, why some patients experience significant pain that is unresponsive to [pain killers](#); whether using a monoclonal antibody (Rituximab), which is highly successful in treating rheumatoid arthritis, some cancers and the profound fatigue experienced in patients with an immune [liver disease](#) known as [primary biliary cirrhosis](#), could be used as a test [experimental medicine](#) approach in order to understand more about fatigue mechanisms; and the link between blood pressure problems and CFS patients.

Professor Stephen Holgate, Chair of the UK CMRC and MRC Professor of Immunopharmacology at the University of Southampton, said: "For the first time the research community and funder in the UK have joined forces in this unique new collaboration to create a step change in the amount and quality of research into chronic fatigue and ME. By coming together in this way, the application of state-of-the-art [research methodology](#) to this complex group of conditions will greatly increase the chance of identifying pathways linked to disease causation and novel therapeutic targets. The key to success will be the engagement of scientists outside the field."

Dr Esther Crawley, Reader in Child Health in the School of Social and Community Medicine at the University of Bristol, added: "CFS or ME can leave many people either housebound or confined to their bed for months or years, causing their lives to change drastically and continued employment to become impossible. We need to join forces with charities and funders to ensure we can best address the needs of patients suffering from this often life-changing condition which affects one to two per cent of adults and teenagers in Britain."

Provided by University of Bristol

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