

## Soft tissue rheumatism (STR) / Complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS)

- **STR** (very common) - regional soft tissue pain not responsive to simple analgesia and physiotherapy
- **CRPS** (very rare): formerly known as reflex sympathetic dystrophy, causalgia or Sudecks atrophy, this is a rare syndrome of limb pain, often precipitated by minor trauma. Pain is out of proportion to inciting event and may have burning/throbbing qualities. There is associated swelling, sensitivity to touch, diffuse temperature change and often an inability to move the joint. Later features include skin trophic changes like hair loss and muscle atrophy.

### Differential diagnoses to consider

- **STR**: Rotator cuff inflammation/trauma, subacromial bursitis (shoulder), trochanteric bursitis (hip), medial or lateral epicondylitis (elbow), anserine bursitis (knee), plantar fasciitis (foot), polymyalgia rheumatica, septic arthritis.

### Information Required

- Specific indication for referral at this time
- Presence of Red Flags
- Duration of symptoms, aggravators, history of trauma
- Functional impairment
- Treatments trialled/ opinions sought to this point

### Investigations Required

- Ultrasound imaging if clinically relevant
- CRP, CBP, ECaLFTs, X-ray of localized area if symptoms have failed to improve

### Fax Referrals to Rheumatology Outpatients

Flinders Medical Centre (FMC)

Fax: 8204 6105 (Clinic B)

Repatriation General Hospital (RGH)

Fax: 8374 2591 (GP liaison)

### Red Flags

-  Fever, red hot swollen joint, source of infection

### Suggested GP Management

- Short term NSAID – oral (unless contraindicated) or topical
- Physiotherapy
- Localised corticosteroid injection if appropriate (could be performed under ultrasound guidance if required)
- CRPS – early referral to acute pain unit

### Clinical Resources

- [www.rheumatology.org.au/community/PatientMedicineInformation.asp](http://www.rheumatology.org.au/community/PatientMedicineInformation.asp)
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome. Fukushima F et al. BMJ 2014, 348:g3683

General Information to assist with referrals and the and Referral templates for FMC and RGH are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients)

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
1.0	August 2014	August 2016	Original