

## PRIMIS case study

Time period: 2020  
Themes: Quality Improvement, Research & Evaluation, Data Specifications & Validation  
Partners: Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust, Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd  
Project: axSpA

### **Title: PRIMIS and Novartis target earlier diagnosis of Axial Spondyloarthritis in BaNES CCG**

#### Overview

Case study on the original axSpA pop-up alert tool project with Dr Raj Sengupta, Consultant Rheumatologist at Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust and a partnership with Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd

#### Full case

PRIMIS in collaboration with Raj Sengupta, Consultant Rheumatologist at the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Bath has developed a clinical system protocol and alert which runs in both EMIS Web and TPP SystmOne GP IT systems thanks to sponsorship from Novartis UK Ltd<sup>1</sup>. This tool has been designed to be used as a decision aid for clinicians managing patients with chronic back pain and includes prompts and pop-up messages to help with earlier diagnosis of axial Spondyloarthritis (axSpA)<sup>2</sup>.

The protocol is activated when patients under 45 years old present with recurring back pain. A pop-up message appears on-screen, prompting the GP to consider axSpA as a possible diagnosis. The fundamental aim of the project is to improve both screening and time to diagnosis of axSpA in general practice. Delay in diagnosis of axSpA is associated with worse outcomes for patients<sup>3</sup>. One of the reasons for any delay in diagnosis is due to the small proportion of axSpA patients within the vast number of patients presenting with back pain to primary care. [LF1]

Working with pilot practices in Bath and North East Somerset CCG and following analysis of data over an 18 month period, the protocol was found to be effective at identifying patients appropriate for further investigation and referral. The tool had been specifically designed so it does not overburden clinicians and this efficiency had been shown to be effective during the pilot.

Moving forward, it is hoped the protocol will be made available for wider use across general practice in England. further taken up across the UK across and made available in all major GP IT systems. Another future intention is that following wider use, the tool's success in identifying patients with axSpA can be tracked and reported upon through collaboration with secondary care rheumatology.

Novartis is a leading global medicine company that use innovative science and digital technologies to create transformative treatments in areas of great medical need.[www.novartis.co.uk](http://www.novartis.co.uk)

axSpA is an umbrella term for inflammatory arthritis where the main symptom is back pain and includes ankylosing spondylitis and non-radiographic axial spondyloarthritis. <https://nass.co.uk/about-as/what-is-as/>

Delayed diagnosis is linked to worse outcomes and unfavourable treatment responses in patients with axial spondyloarthritis' by Mi Ryoung Seo, Hae Lim Baek, Hyun Hwa Yoon, Hee Jung Ryu, Hyo-Jin Choi, Han Joo Baek, Kwang-Pil Ko <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25185731/>