Sue Farrington

Chief executive, Scleroderma & Raynaud’s UK

Scleroderma & Raynaud’s UK (SRUK) is the only charity dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by Scleroderma and Raynaud’s. We exist to improve awareness and understanding of these conditions, to support those affected and, ultimately, to find a cure.

We are delighted to be chosen as CPHVA’s Charity of the Month. SRUK has formed from a merge between the Raynaud’s and Scleroderma Association and Scleroderma Society, providing SRUK with a strong foundation built on 60 years of experience.

To date we have invested over £9.5 million into research alongside providing literature, services and product recommendations to our members and supporters, which has a positive impact on the lives of over 22,000 individuals each year.

Scleroderma, although a rare disease, has many variables and is quite difficult to say (“sklee-uh-duh-ruh”) let alone diagnose! Ninety-five per cent of people with Scleroderma have Raynaud’s and for around 80 per cent of those affected, Raynaud’s was their very first symptom.

Most people living with Raynaud’s have the primary form of the condition where there is no link to any other disease. Since this is estimated to affect up to 10 million people (that’s one in six of us), most choose to ignore it and just get on with life. We aim to address this issue, to ask people to take the condition more seriously because we know it can, in some cases, be the sign of serious underlying condition.

If you know someone with Raynaud’s who also has sore, swollen hands or joints, suffers from frequent reflux or has breathing or swallowing difficulties, make sure they go to their GP for a referral to a rheumatic specialist for some simple tests in order to rule out any other underlying conditions.

We greatly encourage health visitors to look out for signs of Raynaud’s in new mothers, as hormones alter and lives are suddenly affected by a new, sometimes stressful environment. Raynaud’s can appear during breastfeeding, which is most commonly mistaken for thrush or mastitis.

Nurses in the workplace or in schools should also be aware of the challenges someone can face when trying to cope with the condition on a daily basis. Simple work requests, such as altering the air conditioning or being positioned away from a draughty door in the building, can all help stave off a Raynaud’s attack. A few dispensations at school, such as allowing a child extra layers of clothing, specialist footwear or silver fibre gloves can protect the child from a painful attack and can prevent long-term damage.

Our Charity of the Month briefing has much more information on how to identify both the conditions and how to mediate best solutions. For further information visit www.unitetheunion.org/CPHVA and click on June’s Charity of the Month.

Visit: www.sruk.co.uk, like us on Facebook, (@WeAreSRUK) follow us on Twitter @WeAreSRUK or contact our friendly team on 01270 872776.

If you would like to nominate a charity to become CPHVA Charity of the Month, visit: bit.ly/1Qq89HU