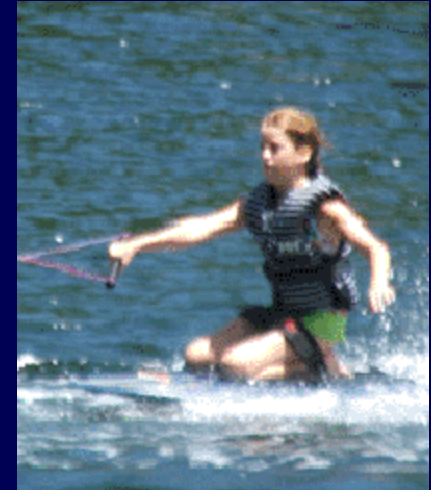


Which of these young women suffer chronic pain?



They all do.

- Each one has been diagnosed with CRPS.
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) is a neurologic syndrome characterized by severe and often burning pain. CRPS pain has been rated worse than that of cancer pain.

Just because you can't see their pain doesn't mean it isn't there.

Pediatric CRPS

Kids shouldn't have to live with chronic pain, particularly the neuropathic (nerve) pain of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS).

But thousands do.

What is CRPS?

- **It is a debilitating neurologic syndrome characterized by**
 - **Severe pain and hypersensitivity**
 - **Skin changes (color, texture, swelling, temperature)**
 - **Functional impairment**

What Causes CRPS?

- **Most often, CRPS develops after a minor trauma, such as a sprain, fall, or even surgery.**
- **Nerves misfire, neurons and immune cells are activated—all of which result in unrelenting pain.**
- **One characteristic of CRPS is that the pain is more severe than expected for the type of injury that occurred.**

Symptoms of CRPS

- Although CRPS is being diagnosed more frequently in children and adolescents, the medical community is generally unaware of its tell-tale symptoms
- Continuing pain
 - *Allodynia*: normal light touch or temperature change leads to pain
 - *Hyperalgesia*: an increased response to pain after the event

Symptoms of CRPS (cont)

- **Abnormal sweating at some point in the painful region**
- **Skin changes (color, texture, swelling, temperature)**
- **Difficulty (and fear) in moving the injured extremity**

Who Can Get CRPS?

- **Anybody!**
- **Girls are affected much more often than boys**
- **The incidence increases markedly just before puberty**
- **People at a higher risk of developing CRPS are**
 - **Dancers**
 - **Gymnasts**
 - **Athletes**

How do you treat children with CRPS ?

- **Team care that incorporates**
 - **Physical therapy leading to active normal use of the involved extremity is considered the most effective**
 - **Behavioral and psychological treatments to help children manage the pain**
 - **Nerve blocks**
 - **Medication to control pain**

Re-education is Key

The pain is so severe that children are often homebound and unable to attend school.

Therapists working with parents and the child re-educate them that moving the limb, while painful, is not harmful. In fact, they must learn to use the limb in order to get better.

"To Hurt is not to Harm."



Children may still have pain, but with successful treatment they can regain their lives.

Although I have had to change my activities, I have found I can still be active. I swim a couple days a week to keep my ankle strong without inflicting pain. I also now horseback ride competitively. All I know at this point is that my life is going to be full of adjusting and changing, but I will never let it stop me from living my life.

--Yvonne Larity

What Happens to Young People with CRPS?



Pain often is ignored, questioned, or even mocked by classmates and teachers.

"I used to wish that I had a broken leg or something so people could see I was hurt. One of the problems with CRPS is that it is an invisible disorder, so people don't believe you're in pain."

**-- Aya Ravek, Ontario, Canada,
diagnosed with CRPS at age 11**

They Miss School

- **Children's Hospital in Boston, reported "the average [CRPS] patient had missed more than 40 days of school in the year following the injury, nearly one-fourth of the academic year."**
- **The good news is that, with treatment, school loss secondary to pain dropped to less than 5 days per year!**

Depression

- **Many of the children and adolescents who have CRPS become depressed and anxious**

Is There a Cure?

- **Not yet, but there are several successful treatments.**
- **Most children improve dramatically with appropriate treatment**
- **There is hope because of people like you who now know about CRPS.**

When Children Hurt, Entire Communities Get Involved



Family and friends of 7-year old Savannah Sipsev participated in the Achilles Walk for Hope & Possibility/ Team RSD in Atlanta to raise awareness and funds in research.

You, too, can help.

You Can Help

- **Learn all you can about CRPS**
- **Visit www.rsds.org**
- **Contact The Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association for ideas on we can work together to raise awareness in your community**

RSDSA

The Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association

Working to raise awareness of Reflex
Sympathetic Dystrophy (RSD) and Complex
Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) since 1984.

www.rsds.org

