

Medically Unexplained Symptoms

A multidisciplinary conference addressing the challenges of medically unexplained symptoms

1 May 2024

Royal Foundation of St Katharine, London



Original conference poster

Breaking the cycle of tests, referrals and unsuccessful treatments

This intensive one-day meeting brought together patients and professionals from primary care, emergency medicine, psychiatry, genetics, ethics, research and integrated medicine to examine why persistent symptoms can be so difficult to navigate - and what better care might look like.

1 DAY

Multidisciplinary meeting

3 PARTS

Problem • Solutions • Learning

15+ VOICES

Patients & professionals

REPORT

Full conference PDF

About the Conference

The conference examined the challenges faced by people living with persistent symptoms without a clear diagnosis, and the pressures these presentations can create for patients, clinicians and healthcare systems.

The programme explored patient experience, consultation difficulties, diagnostic doubt, ethics, genetics, psychiatry, AI, research and supportive approaches.

The central question was not simply how to reach a diagnosis, but how healthcare can continue to support people when the answer remains uncertain.

Conference report

The full report captures key discussions, insights and recommendations from the multidisciplinary meeting and provides a useful companion to the individual recordings.

[View full PDF report](#)

Watch the Conference

Browse the programme in the same three-part structure used on the day

Part 1 - The Problem With MUS

Chaired by Jeshni Amblum-Almer

PATIENT VOICE

The patient's experiences

Christianne Forrest & Katia Chrysostomou

Patient representatives, FPOD

[▶ Watch presentation](#)

The doctors' experiences of MUS

Dr Jay Verma

General Practice and Primary Care Section, Royal Society of Medicine

[▶ Watch presentation](#)

MUS in A&E - is the picture different from primary care?

Dr Jon Matthews

A&E Consultant, St Mary's Hospital, London

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KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Where does the consultation go wrong?

Prof Graham Easton

Professor of Clinical Communication, Academic GP and Broadcaster, Queen Mary University of London

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Part 2 - Exploring Solutions

Chaired by Dr Jay Verma

Ethical considerations in MUS and equity of access: what needs to change?

Chantal Patel & Dr Kiran Jani

Interprofessional studies / UK Clinical Ethics Network

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The importance of clinicians exploring doubt with MUS

Dr Adrian Tookman

Chair, Forgotten Patients, Overlooked Diseases

[▶ Watch presentation](#)

'But, is it all in the mind?' - views of a specialist psychiatrist

Dr Muj Husain

Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist, Persistent Physical Symptom Unit, South London and Maudsley Hospital

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Is genetic testing the answer? Should everyone with MUS undergo genetic testing?

Prof Julian Barwell

Clinical Geneticist and Honorary Professor, University of Leicester

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AI and MUS - Dr GPT will see you now

Dr Keith Grimes

GP and AI in healthcare expert

[▶ Watch presentation](#)

Part 3 - Learning From Others

Chaired by Dr Adrian Tookman

Good medicine has much to offer - practical tips for individuals, families and HCPs

Dr Jay Verma

Royal Society of Medicine and invited contributors

[▶ Watch presentation](#)

Current support and research in the UK and EU

Prof Chris Burton

Professor of Primary Medical Care, University of Sheffield

[▶ Watch presentation](#)

Supportive therapies, innovative approaches and thinking out of the box

Dr Minha Rajput-Ray

Integrated medicine physician, Cùraidh Clinic, Dundee

[▶ Watch presentation](#)

Supportive therapies, innovative approaches and thinking out of the box

Dr Francis Kynaston-Pearson

Consultant rheumatologist, Nottingham and Derby

[▶ Watch presentation](#)

Supportive therapies, innovative approaches and thinking out of the box

Dr Sanjay Gupta

Consultant cardiologist, York Teaching Hospitals

[▶ Watch presentation](#)

What the Programme Explored

The patient experience

How repeated tests, referrals and uncertainty can affect patients and families.

Diagnostic doubt

How clinicians can acknowledge uncertainty without abandoning investigation or support.

Technology & innovation

The potential role - and limitations - of AI and other new approaches.

The consultation

Why communication, labels and expectations matter when there is no straightforward diagnosis.

Different explanations

Perspectives from psychiatry, genetics, emergency medicine, primary care and research.

Supportive care

What can be done for patients while diagnostic questions remain unresolved.

Further Reading

Following the conference, Dr Tessa Richards published an opinion piece in The BMJ summarising several of the issues raised during the meeting. <https://www.bmj.com/content/bmj/385/bmj.q1210.full.pdf>

From identifying the problem to exploring what better care could look like.

Continue exploring FPOD's conferences, research and work to improve recognition and care for overlooked patients.