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Quantitative Sensory & Pressure Testing

Information booklet

At Pain Relief Ireland we provide two types of pain testing to assist us in diagnosing your pain pattern. Quantitative sensory testing (QST) and Myofascial Pressure testing (MPT).

What is QST?

Quantitative sensory testing (QST) is a method used to quantify somatosensory function in response to controlled stimuli in healthy subjects and patients. This allows us examine the function of the small nerve fibers in the skin that carry sensation such as pins and needles, itch, burning, cold, pain and numbness.

Research studies have confirmed the utility of QST for the assessment and monitoring of:

- somatosensory deficits, particularly in diabetic and small fiber neuropathies;
- the assessment of evoked pains (mechanical and thermal allodynia or hyperalgesia);
- and the diagnosis of sensory neuropathies. It is useful in neuromodulation.

Why use QST?

QST can assist in the diagnosis and management of chronic pain. It will allow us ensure that you are getting the correct treatment and we can monitor your progress. We use the most advanced device in thermal pain stimulation, the Advanced Thermosensory Stimulator (TSA2).

What is MPT?

Myofascial pressure testing (MPT) targets pain generated by muscles, tendons and ligaments. Algometers are designed to quantify and document levels of tenderness via pressure pain threshold measurement and pain sensitivity via pressure pain tolerance measurement.

This allows us quantify the level of injury in your musculoskeletal tissue.

We use the AlgoMed a computerised pressure Algometer because it is the first software based computerized Algometer to offer real-time visual & auditory feedback to control & monitor applied pressure rates to measure pressure pain threshold.

Both the QST and MPT tests are non-invasive, non-painful day case assessments that will provide your pain team with very valuable information to help guide your treatment.

What does the testing involve?

We use the most advanced device in thermal pain stimulation, the Advanced Thermosensory Stimulator (TSA2) to examine the function of small pain fibers (QST). The AlgoMed is a computerised pressure assessment for MPT.

- The testing is a 40 minute assessment.
- A small pad is placed on the skin and it does not hurt. There are no needles involved!
- In QST test the temperature slowly increases and you will be asked to press a button when you feel the sensations for the first time.
- In MPT test the pressure slowly increases and you will be asked to press a button when you feel the sensations for the first time.
- We may compare painful with not painful sites to get a comparison.
- These steps will be completed a number of times to get the best quality data.
- It is a short procedure and our team will explain everything on the day.

What are the results?

For the conduct of both tests we use of predefined standardized stimuli and instructions, validated algorithms of testing, and reference values corrected for anatomical site, age, and gender. We compare your results to a large database.

Interpretation of the results will take into account the clinical context or medical conditions specific to your case. When appropriate standards are applied, QST and MPT can provide important and unique information about the functional status of somatosensory system, which would be complementary to already existing clinical methods / data. Your pain physician will assess your results and interpret them for you.

Next steps

1. Book your QST and / or MPT testing at our reception on 021 235 5500
2. The insurance code is 5880 or contact reception for fees