

THE
REAL ROUTE
TO BACK
HEALTH



Back pain...

- affects 4 out of 5 adults at some time
- becomes chronic and disabling for up to 7%
- accounts for some 5 million GP consultations a year
- costs the economy nearly 5 million working days a year
- costs the NHS more than £1 billion a year.

But

- back pain is difficult to prevent and treat because the *prime cause* of the problem remains obscure.



'I've suffered chronic back pain for most of my life, ranging from just manageable to sheer agony. It's wearing, depressing and hugely frustrating'

ELIZABETH MILLS CHARITY CONSULTANT

What we know about back pain

Most chronic back pain is linked with changes to the *intervertebral discs* of the spine. These spongy shock absorbers fit between the bones and stop them grating against each other.

Changes to these discs used to be put down to bad posture and mechanical stresses, such as lifting.

But these external forces are now thought to be less important than the breakdown of cells within the discs themselves. We don't yet know why this happens.

People with back pain now have access to a growing range of sophisticated – and expensive – tests and treatments. But these will not be truly effective until the root causes of back pain are known.



How DISCS makes a difference

DISCS is the only UK charity solely concerned with improving the prevention and treatment of back pain by funding research into its causes.

We have already funded groundbreaking research into factors involved in the breakdown of cells in the discs. And we are very keen to follow up these early findings.

We intend to boost fundraising for research so that we can distribute £1 million a year in grants by 2014.

To do this, we need the support of everyone with a stake in beating back pain, including:

- people with back pain and their networks
- health professionals who manage back pain
- employers
- government
- the research community.



'We can put a man on the moon but we still don't know the cause of a problem that affects four out of five people. Until we do, there is no hope of effective treatment'

ALISON MCGREGOR SPINAL RESEARCHER

OUR MISSION

DISCS is the only UK charity solely concerned with understanding the causes of back pain with a view to improving prevention and treatment. It funds pioneering research into all causes and mechanisms of back pain and disseminates key findings to health professionals, decision-makers and opinion-formers for the public benefit.

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THE ECONOMY AND
SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.
THE SOLUTION LIES IN
BETTER RESEARCH'**

Sean Hughes, Chairman, DISCS



Unit 1, The Granary, Bignell Park Barns,
Chesterton, Oxfordshire OX26 1TD

T: 01869 325000 (*messages only*)

E: discsfoundation@yahoo.co.uk

W: www.discsfoundation.org

Registered Charity No 1024471