

Ataxia Clinic



Information for patients

Neurology



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What is ataxia?

Ataxia is a term used to describe problems with balance and co-ordination. There are many causes of ataxia that can affect people in different ways.

What is the Ataxia Centre Specialist Clinic?

The Sheffield Ataxia Specialist Clinic is one of only three Ataxia UK accredited centres of excellence in the UK. Most individuals with ataxia will benefit from care by a specialist team who know a lot about the condition. The aim of the clinic is to identify the precise cause of your ataxia and provide you with on-going monitoring and management, advice and practical support.

Can I bring someone with me?

Often it can be useful to bring a family member or friend; please feel free to do so.

Should I bring anything with me?

It can be helpful if you bring a list of your medicines, including the dosage and how often you take them. If you have any letters from other doctors about your ataxia please bring them too.

Will I be able to park?

When you receive your appointment you should also receive information about how to get to the hospital, parking availability and a map. **Please note that parking is extremely restricted.**

You can use the multi-storey car park at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, and there are a limited number of disabled spaces. It does however fill up very quickly. Because of this, you will need to allow extra time to find a parking space.



The Ataxia Team

Dr Shanmugarajah, Emma Foster, Professor Hadjivassiliou and Suzanna Duty

Who will I see at the Ataxia Centre Clinic?

Professor Marios Hadjivassiliou is a consultant neurologist who has many years' experience of working with patients with ataxia. The clinic has a second consultant neurologist, Dr Priya Shanmugarajah, who has worked with Professor Hadjivassiliou for many years.

The clinic also has two ataxia nurses: Emma Foster and Suzanna Duty. On Wednesdays, there is access to Lee Drake, Neuro Physiotherapist in the clinic.

Other doctors who are part of the Neurology Team may be present in clinic.

At your appointment you may see any member of the Ataxia Team and, depending on the situation, you may see several members of the team on the same day.

What is an ataxia nurse specialist?

The ataxia nurse specialist is there to offer support to individuals who have ataxia and their families. They can provide information about where to access help and assistance as well as details on how to manage the condition. With your agreement, they can make referrals to other agencies that might be useful to you. The nurse specialists can provide advice and investigation for continence issues if needed.

What will happen when I come to the Ataxia Centre?

A receptionist will check your details and you will be directed to the waiting area. Refreshments are usually available. Patients are seen in time order. When it is your turn to be seen you will be shown through to the relevant member of the Ataxia Team.

Your first appointment will often be longer than follow-up visits. You will see one of the neurology consultants, either Professor Hadjivassiliou or Dr Shanmugarajah. They will ask you a lot of questions about your general health and more specifically about the symptoms that you have. You will be examined but you will not need to undress for this; most often removing socks and shoes will be all that is needed.

Once the examination is completed, a member of the Ataxia Team will explain what has been found. They will also discuss with you a plan of action in terms of any further investigations needed, and ongoing management.

Will I have any tests on the day?

It is quite common to have blood tests on the day. Please try to allow time for this as there can be a queue. Other tests, for example brain scans, may need to be booked for another day and it will be explained how to do this.

What happens after the appointment?

Usually, after your first appointment, you will be given a follow-up appointment which will normally be in about 6 months' time.

Sometimes you may receive letters between appointments letting you know results if they are relevant. We will also inform your GP of your attendance, findings, investigations and your management plan.

What happens about long term follow-up?

Whatever the cause of your ataxia, things can change over a period of time and therefore it is important to continue to be seen in clinic. If you are travelling a long distance and would like to space your appointments out more, please discuss it with us and we will do what we can to help. At your follow-up visits you may see any one of the doctors and nurses in the Ataxia Team. Each member of the team has access to the consultant in clinic should a problem arise.

What if I have any questions?

If your question is about test results, tests being arranged, letters to your GP, etc, please contact the relevant secretary.

If you have seen Professor Hadjivassiliou, you can contact his secretary on **0114 271 2502**

If you have seen Dr Shanmugarajah, you can contact her secretary on **0114 271 3708**

If you are worried, have a question about your condition, or if you feel that things are not going well, please contact the nurses.

The ataxia nurse specialists, Emma and Suzanna, can be contacted on **0114 271 3946**. They work Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays and there is a 24 hour answer machine.

Notes

Please use this space to write down any questions you may wish to ask

Notes



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