

Rheumatology Health Professionals Association (RHPA)

Ankylosing Spondylitis Special Interest Group (ASSIG)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

21 August 2015

1. Background

Physiotherapists with an interest in the management of Ankylosing Spondylitis and associated conditions held two meetings in 2010 and a third in May 2011. The meetings were auspiced by a pharmaceutical company, with the initial network developed by Margaret Lewington based on state representation. Common goals and projects were discussed, which aligned well with the Mission and Goals of the RHPA. Following further discussion among the initial group via email, it was agreed that formalization as an RHPA Special Interest Group would best facilitate the development of a sustainable and viable group.

In May 2011, an initial committee was formed consisting of the attendees of the initial meetings, and the original terms of reference were developed. This included that memberships were available to all full members of RHPA i.e. all disciplines, and this was to be encouraged. The next face-to face meeting - the first General Meeting - of ASSIG was held in May 2013. At this time, the terms of reference were adapted to meet the current and ongoing purpose of the group.

2. Purpose

ASSIG aims to promote and support the optimal management of individuals with Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) and associated conditions.

3. Goals

- Promote the public awareness of AS and associated conditions.
- Provide a forum for communication, liaison and information sharing for health professionals working in this area.
- Facilitate the education of health professionals in the contemporary management of AS and associated conditions.

- Liaise with, and provide independent advice to, other organizations, such as patient support groups, government organizations, health providers and pharmaceutical companies.
- Support research into AS and associated conditions.

4. Structure and Membership

4.1 ASSIG is an ongoing sub-group of the RHPA.

4.2 Membership of ASSIG is limited to full members of the RHPA.

4.3 Any member of the RHPA can nominate to join or withdraw membership of ASSIG at any time. Nomination or withdrawal is made by email to the Secretary of ASSIG.

4.4 ASSIG will have a committee of a chairperson, secretary and treasurer, plus chairs of working groups.

- **Chairperson:** responsible for arranging and chairing meetings; representation of ASSIG in other forums.
- **Secretary:** responsible for maintaining a current ASSIG membership list; preparing and distributing meeting agendas and minutes; preparation of an annual progress report to the RHPA and ARA newsletter reports as required.
- **Treasurer:** responsible for preparation of budget requests or reports.
- Working groups with chairs will be determined to meet needs as they arise. All members of ASSIG are to be invited to join them.

4.5 Nomination for positions shall be sought from current members of ASSIG.

4.6 Each portfolio to be held initially for a period of one year.

5 Meetings

5.1 ASSIG aims to meet face to face once per year at the Annual National Conference and via teleconference, if required. Other business will be conducted by email where possible. The minimum requirement for a quorum is three members.

5.2 Working groups will conduct business by email but may arrange a teleconference, if required.

6 Governance and Finance

6.1 As an RHPA sub-group, ASSIG is under the direction and control of the RHPA Board of Directors, and adopts the RHPA constitution in its entirety.

6.2 Copies of ASSIG meeting agendas and minutes shall be provided to the RHPA, with brief annual report prior to the RHPA annual general meeting.

6.3 The RHPA will fund up to three ASSIG teleconferences per year. Financial requests for additional funding will be made in writing to the RHPA with as much notice as possible.

6.4 ASSIG may seek funding from external bodies, such as pharmaceutical companies, for specific, time-limited projects. A written agreement, approved by the RHPA, is required for any such funding, specifying:

- time frame for the project
- project aims and outputs
- itemized budget
- expected contributions from both parties
- intellectual property agreement (if applicable)
- legal liability (if applicable)

6.5 In the event of an unresolved grievance by a member of ASSIG, the matter should be referred to the RHPA for resolution.