



Associate Parliamentary Limb Loss Group

for the Promotion of the Prevention of Limb Loss and of the Provision of Prosthetic, Orthotic, Wheelchair/Special Seating, Medical and other vital Rehabilitation Services to persons of all ages suffering Limb Loss and associated Complex Physical Disabilities in the United Kingdom and Internationally

OXFORD EASES AMPUTEES PAIN



**Nicola Blackwood MP
and Andrew Smith MP**



**Welcome Caring
“Hands-On” Research
and Development**

Doctors and Scientists in Oxford are collaborating to ease the real but so-called 'phantom' limb pain, which can be life-long after you have been undergone an amputation, and which can destroy your quality of life.

Dr. David Henderson Slater (Consultant in neurological disability and rehabilitation with the Oxford Centre for Enablement, and Senior Research Fellow at Oxford University) and Dr. Tamar Makin (post-doctoral research fellow at the Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Brain Centre – FMRI - based in the John Radcliffe Hospital) are jointly venturing to help better characterise phantom limb pain.

Previous work at the Oxford Centre for Enablement, led by Professor Jonathan Cole from Bournemouth University, used a Nintendo Wii-style device to see if it eased chronic pain for amputees. Many of the trial subjects (upper and lower limb amputees) say the device reduces their pain. A high percentage of amputees who use the device feel briefly (while the experiment is running, and for a short time afterwards) that they have not lost a limb; this seems to ease their pain. Better understanding of phantom limb pain should result, with improved rehabilitation techniques for accident victims.

Such welcome developments are now being progressed utilising different research initiatives' by Dr Henderson Slater and Dr Tamar Makin at the FMRIB.

Dr. Makin says: ***"Specific parts of the brain control different parts of the body. Our research will test what happens to parts of the brain controlling the arm and hands when the limb is missing."***

Dr Henderson Slater adds: ***"It is remarkable how little we really understand about how the brain responds to loss of a limb, and how little we really know of the cause and natural history of phantom pain. We hope that this exciting new research project using cutting edge technology will open doors and allow us to understand what is going on deep in the brain"***

Researchers also want to recruit people born without an arm or hand as there is evidence those with congenital limb deficiency have different activity in the brain.

Oxford West MP **Nicola Blackwood** says: ***"I am delighted that the Oxford Centre for Enablement in my constituency is doing such important work into***

phantom pain. I wish Dr Makin and Dr Slater all the best as they try and improve the lives of amputees, far too many of whom struggle with chronic pain on a daily basis.”

Oxford East MP **Andrew Smith** says: *“I am a long-standing advocate of medical resources for Oxford, including specialist orthopaedic services and children’s care; I welcome this research and its potential for relieving sufferers of pain.”*

Gail Wellings, Chair of the User Group at the Oxford Centre for Enablement says: *“It is really good news that this vital hands-on caring research and development is being supported by our Oxford Members of Parliament. As a supporter of the All-Party Parliamentary Limb Loss Group, I look forward on behalf of all my fellow amputees, nationally and internationally, to further good news. There must sometimes be pain but the less we have of it the better.”*



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