Complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) – from a conundrum to a (partial) understanding F. Birklein, Mainz, Germany

For decades, the attempts to explain and treat CRPS were more or less based on myths than on facts. However, latest scientific achievements in the field of CRPS research now allow me to delineate the pathophysiology of different symptoms for a better understanding of CRPS as a whole. Highlights of this presentation will be the reporting about posttraumatic inflammation sensitizing peripheral nociceptors, CNS reorganization as a consequence of this permanent nociceptive input into the brain and the negative feedback of this CNS reorganization via the sympathetics acting back on these sensitized nociceptors. I will demonstrate that it could be possible to distinguish clinical symptoms arising from the different pathomechanisms so that a pathophysiology – oriented treatment can be initiated. At the end we will hopefully get a little bit closer to the clinical mystery “CRPS”.

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