Information for patients

What is Quantitative Sensory Testing (QST)?
How will having Quantitative Sensory Testing (QST) help me?

Nerves are like wires and sensory nerves pass messages from the surface of the skin to the brain. Having QST may help people with conditions involving sensory problems such as pain, numbness, burning or tingling. A range of conditions can cause damage to the nerve endings, this is called a neuropathy. QST can help to make the diagnosis.

What is Quantitative Sensory Testing?

Quantitative Sensory Testing is used to measure how the nerve endings work. There are 2 types of tests, thermal threshold testing and vibration testing.
What is a thermal threshold test?
A thermal threshold test is used to measure responses in mainly small nerve endings which detect changes in temperature.

What is a vibration test?
A vibration test is used to measure responses in mainly large nerve endings which detect vibrations.
Where are the tests done?
The test is done in a small recording room on N floor of the Royal Hallamshire Hospital. The room contains a couch, chairs and some equipment. The technician who does the test will be there and, if you wish, there is room for someone to come in with you.

How long will I be at the hospital?
Each of these tests takes about 30 minutes. Sometimes you may be referred for both tests which would take an hour.

Is the test safe?
Yes, there are no special preparations and no side effects.

What happens before the test?
Firstly you will be made comfortable in a chair and the test will be explained to you.

What happens during the test?
A small device which produces temperature changes or vibrations will be held on your hand and later on your foot. You will be given brief changes in temperature (thermal threshold testing) or vibrations (vibration testing) and the technician will ask you if you felt anything. The results are put into a computer and this produces a graph of the results.
When will I get the results of the test?

You will not get the results of the tests on the same day because it takes time to analyse them. Your consultant will be sent a report which they will then discuss with you.

What if I want any further information?

If after reading this leaflet you are unsure about anything, please ring the Department of Neurophysiology on

0114 271 2129
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals supports organ donation. Do you?

www.neurocare.org.uk
0114 267 6464
appeals@neurocare.org.uk

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