

# LEARN ABOUT ANTIPHOSPHOLIPID SYNDROME (APS)



 In partnership with  
**RCGP Learning**  
Essential CPD for primary care

The medical charity APS Support UK has partnered with the Royal College of GPs to produce an online training course that aims to help GPs recognise antiphospholipid syndrome (APS).

Antiphospholipid syndrome, sometimes known as Hughes syndrome or 'sticky blood', is an incurable, under-diagnosed autoimmune disease that carries an increased risk of thrombotic and obstetric complications.

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## THE FACTS

More women than men are affected by APS with the majority of patients aged between 20 and 50, although the condition can affect all age groups from infancy to old age. Whilst there has been no large-scale epidemiological study, it is estimated that APS causes approximately 15% of strokes, heart attacks and DVTs in the under 50s. In pregnancy, APS is the most important, potentially treatable cause of recurrent miscarriage.

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## ELEARNING MODULE

The antiphospholipid syndrome eLearning module takes 30 minutes to complete and is **FREE** to both members and non-members of the RCGP.

On successful completion you will be awarded 0.5 Continuing Professional Developments points and will be issued with a certificate.

<http://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/aps>

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Access the course here 

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Whilst it is usually diagnosed in secondary care, the Royal College states that GPs need to be aware of APS in order to make appropriate referrals in those who meet the clinical diagnostic criteria.

Autoantibodies directed against phospholipid binding proteins (lupus anticoagulant, anticardiolipin antibodies and antibodies to  $\beta 2$  glycoprotein 1) are associated with arterial and venous thrombosis, most commonly stroke and venous thromboembolism which may be fatal.

The management of thrombosis due to APS is different from non-APS thrombosis. Patients with APS need long-term (often lifelong) anticoagulation to avoid further clots or strokes. Recognising that a patient has APS is therefore very important.

In pregnancy, APS is usually associated with recurrent fetal losses, but it can also cause other pregnancy complications including pre-eclampsia, premature delivery and stillbirth.

Correct obstetric management of a patient with APS involves treatment with heparin and aspirin and can dramatically increase the chances of a successful pregnancy.

Currently, on average, it takes three years for someone to be diagnosed with APS, so please consider taking this course and help our charity achieve earlier diagnosis for patients.

### CONTACT US

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The charity's website has a list of specialists throughout the UK which you may find a helpful resource.

Find out more here

[www.aps-support.org.uk](http://www.aps-support.org.uk)