

THE HAWKINS INSTITUTE

RESEARCHING CHILDHOOD LIMB PAIN AND GROWTH

BY DR CHARLOTTE HAWKINS

As a paediatric specialist with over 30 years of clinical experience in central London, and 15 years working across Africa in child health outreach, I've had the privilege of caring for thousands of children struggling with lower limb discomfort—often dismissed under the term “growing pains.”

Over the years, one pattern became impossible to ignore: these children weren't just going through a phase. They were in real pain, often misunderstood, and frequently underserved by a label that offers no clarity, no direction, and no solution.

I created the Beyond Growing Pains campaign to challenge this outdated narrative. “Growing pains” is not a diagnosis—it's a blanket term that can delay meaningful investigation and support. In my experience, these symptoms are often linked to biomechanical imbalances, musculoskeletal strain, postural issues, or even underlying medical conditions. And far too many children are silently missing out on sports, play, and physical confidence because of it.

This campaign is about listening differently. It's about helping parents, teachers, and healthcare professionals look beneath the surface of “it's just growing pains” to uncover what's really happening in a child's development.

My mission is to raise awareness, provide education, and build a new framework for early identification, research, and compassionate intervention. Whether through school partnerships, parent talks, or collaborations with frontline clinicians, I want to ensure no child's pain is overlooked.

Thank you for joining me in this mission. Together, we can give children the care—and the clarity—they deserve.

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