

Article review

## Fibromyalgia Syndrome: An Overview of Symptoms, Diagnosis, Complications and Treatment

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### Abstract

Fibromyalgia is a syndrome characterized by chronic wide- spread pain at multiple tender points, joint stiffness, and. systemic symptoms (e.g., mood disorders, fatigue, cognitive. dysfunction, and insomnia) without a well-defined. underlying organic disease. A model of fibromyalgia pathogenesis has been suggested in which biological and psychosocial variables interact to influence the predisposition, triggering and aggravation of a chronic disease, but the details are unclear. Diagnosis requires the history of a typical cluster of symptoms and the exclusion of a somatic disease that sufficiently explains the symptoms by medical examination. Current evidence-based guidelines emphasize the value of multimodal treatments, which encompass both non-pharmacological and selected pharmacological treatments tailored to individual symptoms, including pain, fatigue, sleep problems and mood problems.

Key words : Fibromyalgia , musculo-skeletal system and connective tissue diseases,Rheumatoid diseases

### 1:Introduction

**Fibromyalgia (FM)** is a medical condition characterized by chronic widespread pain and a heightened pain response to pressure [3]. Other symptoms include tiredness to a degree that normal activities are affected, sleep problems and troubles with memory [4]. Some people also report restless legs syndrome, bowel or bladder problems, numbness and tingling and sensitivity to noise, lights or temperature [5]. Fibromyalgia is frequently associated with depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder Other types of chronic pain are also frequently present [4].

The cause of fibromyalgia is unknown, however, it is believed to involve a combination of genetic and environmental factors [5]. The condition runs in families and many genes are believed to be involved. Environmental factors may include psychological stress, trauma and certain infections. The pain appears to result from processes in the central nervous system and the condition is referred to as a "central sensitization syndrome".Fibromyalgia is recognized as a disorder by the US National Institutes of Health and the American College of Rheumatology [9]. There is no specific diagnostic test. Diagnosis involves first ruling out other potential causes and verifying that a set number of symptoms are present [5].

Fibromyalgia is estimated to affect 2–8% of the population ,women are affected about twice as often as men It most commonly develops between the ages of 25 and 55, although children can also get it. It's thought that people can inherit genes that make them more likely to get fibromyalgia, and the condition can then be triggered by an injury, physical or psychological trauma, or stress [4].

Recommendations the treatment of fibromyalgia often include getting enough sleep, exercising regularly, and eating a healthy diet. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) may also be helpful. The medications duloxetine, milnacipran or pregabalin may be used. Use of opioid pain medication is controversial, with some stating their usefulness is poorly supported by evidence and others saying that weak opioids may be reasonable if other medications are not effective [9].

Dietary supplements lack evidence to support their use. While fibromyalgia can last a long time, it does not result in death or tissue damage.

## 2:Symptoms

The main symptoms of fibromyalgia are:

- pain –may feel as though have got pain that spreads throughout entire body, with certain parts – such as neck and back – feeling particularly painful
- tiredness, fatigue and generally feeling like have no energy
- sleeping badly – waking up feeling unrested
- aching and stiffness, which often feels worse during or after activity.

It's common for condition to flare-up, making symptoms suddenly worse. Fibromyalgia can also cause:

- forgetfulness or poor concentration
- stress, worry or low mood
- tingling, numbness or swelling of hands and feet
- headaches
- restless legs syndrome – a tingling, uncomfortable feeling in legs, especially at night
- irritability, or feeling low or weepy
- feeling like urgently need to wee, especially at night
- painful menstrual periods
- diarrhoea, constipation and stomach pain – sometimes separately diagnosed as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- increased sensitivity to things like cold, sound, knocks and bumps
- tender or overly sensitive joints and muscles

The pain may feel like it's affecting whole body, or it may be particularly bad in just a few areas. Some people say their pain gets worse in extreme temperatures, such as very hot, cold or damp weather.

People often say that besides the pain, fatigue is the worst part of fibromyalgia. This can be linked to a difficulty to think clearly or remember things properly, which is sometimes called fibro fog or brain fog.

## 3:Fibromyalgia symptoms in women | Symptoms in women

Fibromyalgia symptoms have generally been more severe in women than in men. Women have more widespread pain, IBS symptoms, and morning fatigue than men. Painful periods are also common.

However, when the 2016 revisions to the diagnostic criteria are applied, more men are being diagnosed with fibromyalgia, which may reduce the degree of distinction between the pain levels men and women experience. More research needs to be done to further evaluate that distinction.

The transition to menopause could make fibromyalgia worse. Complicating things is the fact that some symptoms of menopause and fibromyalgia look almost identical.

## 4:Stronger menstrual pain in women with fibromyalgia

Menstrual period cramps can be mild or painful, depending on the woman. In a report by the National Fibromyalgia Association, women with the condition have more painful periods than usual. Sometimes the pain fluctuates with their menstrual cycle.

Most women with fibromyalgia are also between the ages of 40 to 55 years old. Fibromyalgia symptoms may feel worse in women who are postmenopausal or are experiencing menopause.

Menopause with fibromyalgia may increase feelings of:

- crankiness
- soreness
- achiness
- anxiety

body produces 40 percent less estrogen after menopause. Estrogen is a huge player in controlling serotonin, which controls pain and mood. Some fibromyalgia symptoms can mirror symptoms of perimenopause, or “around menopause.” [6]

### 5:Fibromyalgia in men

Men also get fibromyalgia. Yet, they may remain undiagnosed because this is seen as a woman’s disease. However, current statistics show that as the 2016 diagnostic protocol is more readily applied, more men are being diagnosed.

Men also have severe pain and emotional symptoms from fibromyalgia. The condition affects their quality of life, career, and relationships, according to a [2018 survey](#) published in the American Journal of Public Health[5].

Part of the stigma and difficulty in getting diagnosed stems from society’s expectation that men who are in pain should “suck it up.”

Sometimes men receive a misdiagnosis because they may describe fibromyalgia symptoms differently. Women often report higher pain intensity than men. The reasons behind this may be related to hormones, immune system differences, or genes. Still, researchers aren’t sure why women have a higher risk for developing fibromyalgia than men. The only way to test for it is to rule out other possible conditions[7].

### 6:Diagnosis

Fibromyalgia can sometimes be difficult to diagnose, as the symptoms vary from person to person.

There are some common symptoms your doctor will look for to help diagnose fibromyalgia, including:

- severe pain that has lasted three months or more
- fatigue
- regularly waking up feeling unrefreshed
- problems with memory and understanding.

There aren’t any specific blood tests, x-rays or scans to confirm a diagnosis of fibromyalgia. But might have blood tests to check for other conditions.

Many symptoms of fibromyalgia are similar to those of other conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, Sjögren’s syndrome (sher-grenz sindrome) and an underactive thyroid gland.

Some people may be diagnosed and treated for one of these other conditions. Itis also possible to have one of these conditions as well as fibromyalgia [8,12].

### 7:What are the risk factors for fibromyalgia?

Known risk factors include:

- Age. Fibromyalgia can affect people of all ages, including children,elderly were morelikely. Lupus or Rheumatoid Arthritis..

Some other factors have been weakly associated with the onset of fibromyalgia, but more research is needed to see if they are real. These possible risk factors include:

- Sex. Women are twice as likely to have fibromyalgia as men.
- Stressful or traumatic events, such as car accidents, post- traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- Repetitive injuries. Injury from repetitive stress on a joint, such as frequent knee bending.
- Illness (such as viral infections).
- Family history.
- Obesity. [9]

### 8: Complications of fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia can cause pain, disability, and a lower quality of life. US adults with fibromyalgia may have complications such as:

- More hospitalizations. If one have fibromyalgia, will be twice as likely to be hospitalized as someone without fibromyalgia.
- Lower quality of life. Women with fibromyalgia may experience a lower quality of life.
- Higher rates of major depression. Adults with fibromyalgia are more than 3 times more likely to have major depression than adults without fibromyalgia. Screening and treatment for depression are extremely important.
- Higher death rates from suicide and injuries. Death rates from suicide and injuries are higher among fibromyalgia patients, but overall mortality among adults with fibromyalgia is similar to the general population.
- Higher rates of other rheumatic conditions. Fibromyalgia often co-occurs with other types of arthritis such as osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, and ankylosing spondylitis[7,10].

### 9: Treatment of fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia can be effectively treated and managed with medication and self-management strategies.

Fibromyalgia should be treated by a doctor or team of healthcare professionals who specialize in the treatment of fibromyalgia and other types of arthritis, called rheumatologists. Doctors usually treat fibromyalgia with a combination of treatments, which may include:

- Medications, including prescription drugs and over-the-counter pain relievers.
- Aerobic exercise and muscle strengthening exercise.
- Patient education classes, usually in primary care or community settings.
- Stress management techniques such as meditation, yoga, and massage.
- Good sleep habits to improve the quality of sleep.
- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to treat underlying depression. CBT is a type of talk therapy meant to change the way people act or think.

In addition to medical treatment, people can manage their fibromyalgia with the self-management strategies described below, which are proven to reduce pain and disability, so they can pursue the activities important to them[6,13].

### 10: Fibromyalgia natural remedies

If the medications healthcare provider prescribes don't entirely relieve fibromyalgia symptoms, it can look for alternatives. Many natural treatments focus on lowering stress and reducing pain. and can be used alone or together with traditional medical treatments.

Natural remedies for fibromyalgia include:

- physical therapy
- acupuncture
- 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP)
- meditation
- yoga, use with caution if hypermobility is present
- tai chi
- exercise
- massage therapy
- a balanced, healthy diet

Therapy can potentially reduce the stress that triggers fibromyalgia symptoms and depression. Group therapy may be the most affordable option, and it will give a chance to meet others who are going through the same issues.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is another option that can help manage stressful situations. Individual therapy is also available if prefer one-on-one help.

It's important to note that most alternative treatments for fibromyalgia haven't been thoroughly studied or proven effective[1,14] .

### 11:Fibromyalgia pain

Pain is the hallmark fibromyalgia symptom. You'll feel it in various muscles and other soft tissues around the body.

The pain can range from a mild achiness to an intense and almost unbearable discomfort. Its severity could dictate how well you cope day to day.Fibromyalgia appears to stem from an abnormal nervous system response. body overreacts to things that shouldn't normally be painful. And you may feel the pain in more than one area of body [2].

### 12:Chest pain

When fibromyalgia pain is in chest, it can feel frighteningly similar to the pain of a heart attack.

Chest pain in fibromyalgia is actually centered in the cartilage that connects ribs to breastbone. The pain may radiate to shoulders and arms.

Fibromyalgia chest pain may feel:

- sharp
- stabbing
- like a burning sensation

And similar to a heart attack, it can make struggle to catch breath. [5].

### 13:Back pain

back is one of the most common places to feel pain.

About 80 percent of Americans have low back pain at some point in their lives. If back hurts, it may not be clear whether fibromyalgia is to blame, or another condition like arthritis or a pulled muscle.

Other symptoms like brain fog and fatigue can help pinpoint fibromyalgia as the cause. It's also possible to have a combination of fibromyalgia and arthritis.

The same medications take to relieve other fibromyalgia symptoms can also help with back pain. Stretching and strengthening exercises can help provide support to the muscles and other soft tissues of back [15].

### 14:Leg pain

One can also feel fibromyalgia pain in the muscles and soft tissues of legs. Leg pain can feel similar to the soreness of a pulled muscle or the stiffness of arthritis. It can be:

- deep
- burning
- throbbing

Sometimes fibromyalgia in the legs feels like numbness or tingling. it may have a creepy crawling sensation. An uncontrollable urge to move legs is a sign of restless legs syndrome (RLS), which can overlap with fibromyalgia[3]

### 15: Fibromyalgia diet recommendations

Some people report that they feel better when they follow a specific diet plan or avoid certain foods. But research hasn't proven that any one diet improves fibromyalgia symptoms.

Nutrition is important in helping to keep body healthy, to prevent symptoms from getting worse, and to provide body with a constant energy supply.

Dietary strategies to keep in mind:

- Eat fruits and vegetables, along with whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Eat more plants than meat.
- Reduce the amount of sugar in your diet.
- Exercise.
- Work toward achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

it may find that certain foods make symptoms worse, such as gluten or MSG[8].

### 16: Fibromyalgia pain relief

Fibromyalgia pain can be uncomfortable and consistent enough to interfere with daily routine. Don't just settle for pain.

One option is to take pain relievers such as:

- aspirin
- ibuprofen
- naproxen sodium
- help with discomfort
- lower pain levels

These medications bring down inflammation. Though inflammation is not a primary part of fibromyalgia, it may be present as an overlap with RA or another condition. Pain relievers may help sleep better[8].

### Conclusion

given the wide range of non-pharmacologic therapies available and showing promising results in FM, physicians should be able to tailor the treatment to the most prevalent FM manifestations (pain, sleep disturbances, mood disorders, somatic symptoms). Moreover, in the near future, the possibility to deliver psychological or physical therapy directly at home by means of a portable device or internet-based platforms could significantly increase the adherence to treatment and reduce direct and indirect costs.

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