

A brief note on Fibromyalgia chronic pain.

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Introduction

Fibromyalgia is a complex chronic pain disorder that affects millions of individuals worldwide. It is characterized by widespread pain, tenderness, fatigue, and other accompanying symptoms. Fibromyalgia chronic pain poses significant challenges to those living with the condition, impacting various aspects of their lives, including physical and mental well-being, daily functioning, and overall quality of life. This article provides an overview of fibromyalgia chronic pain, its symptoms, potential causes, diagnostic criteria, and explores the impact it has on individuals who experience this condition [1].

Fibromyalgia chronic pain

Fibromyalgia chronic pain is a condition characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain and tenderness, often accompanied by fatigue, sleep disturbances, cognitive difficulties (referred to as "fibro fog"), and mood disturbances. The exact cause of fibromyalgia is still unknown, but research suggests that it may involve a combination of genetic, environmental, and neurochemical factors. It is believed that abnormalities in the way the central nervous system processes pain signals contribute to the development and persistence of fibromyalgia chronic pain.

Symptoms of fibromyalgia chronic pain vary among individuals but commonly include:

Widespread pain and tenderness: Pain is experienced in multiple areas of the body, such as the neck, shoulders, back, hips, and extremities. Pressure applied to these tender points may exacerbate pain.

Fatigue: Individuals with fibromyalgia often experience persistent fatigue, even after adequate rest.

Sleep disturbances: Sleep problems, such as difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or non-restorative sleep, are common in fibromyalgia.

Cognitive difficulties: Fibro fog refers to cognitive difficulties, including memory problems, difficulty concentrating, and impaired thinking.

Mood disorders: Depression and anxiety frequently coexist with fibromyalgia chronic pain [2].

Diagnosis

Diagnosing fibromyalgia can be challenging due to the

absence of specific diagnostic tests. Healthcare professionals rely on clinical evaluation and assessment of symptoms based on established criteria. The American College of Rheumatology's diagnostic criteria involve widespread pain lasting for at least three months and tenderness in at least 11 out of 18 specific tender points. However, diagnosis goes beyond tender points and considers the individual's overall symptomatology, medical history, and exclusion of other conditions that may present similar symptoms. The subjective nature of fibromyalgia chronic pain poses challenges in diagnosis and can lead to delayed recognition and validation of the condition. Fibromyalgia chronic pain significantly affects various aspects of daily life and quality of life for individuals living with the condition. The impact includes:

Physical functioning: Widespread pain and fatigue can limit physical functioning, making daily tasks and activities challenging. Individuals may experience reduced mobility, decreased endurance, and difficulty engaging in exercise or recreational activities.

Sleep disturbances: The disrupted sleep patterns associated with fibromyalgia chronic pain can lead to persistent fatigue, daytime sleepiness, and decreased energy levels. This can further contribute to reduced productivity and overall functioning [3].

Cognitive impairment: Fibro fog, characterized by memory problems, difficulty concentrating, and impaired thinking, can interfere with work performance, social interactions, and overall cognitive functioning.

Emotional well-being: Chronic pain and its impact on daily life can lead to emotional distress, including depression, anxiety, and feelings of frustration or helplessness. The constant battle with pain and its unpredictable nature can significantly affect mental health and emotional well-being.

Social relationships: Fibromyalgia chronic pain can impact social relationships and support systems. Individuals may experience difficulty attending social events, engaging in activities with family and friends, and may require understanding and accommodations from their loved ones.

Employment and financial impact: The chronic nature of fibromyalgia pain can result in reduced work productivity, increased absenteeism, and decreased earning potential. This can lead to financial strain and additional stressors for individuals with fibromyalgia [4].

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Managing fibromyalgia chronic pain

While there is no cure for fibromyalgia, various treatment approaches can help manage the symptoms and improve quality of life. These may include a combination of medication management, physical therapy, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), stress reduction techniques, and lifestyle modifications. Medication management may involve the use of analgesics, antidepressants, anticonvulsants, or muscle relaxants to alleviate pain and address associated symptoms. Physical therapy and exercise programs tailored to the individual's capabilities can help improve strength, flexibility, and overall physical functioning. Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can assist individuals in coping with pain, managing stress, and addressing any associated mood disorders. Relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing exercises, meditation, and yoga, can also help manage pain and reduce stress levels. Lifestyle modifications, including maintaining a balanced diet, practicing good sleep hygiene, pacing activities, and finding a balance between rest and exercise, can also play a crucial role in managing fibromyalgia chronic pain [5].

Conclusion

Fibromyalgia chronic pain is a complex condition that significantly impacts individuals' physical and emotional well-being, daily functioning, and quality of life. Its symptoms and challenges can be debilitating, but with a comprehensive management approach that includes medication, physical therapy, psychological support, and lifestyle modifications,

individuals can find relief and improve their overall well-being. Increased awareness, research, and support systems are essential in providing a better understanding of fibromyalgia chronic pain and improving the lives of those affected by this condition.

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