



Fibromyalgia

The Danish Fibromyalgia - Association

What is fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a chronic disorder characterized by aches and pains of the muscles and joints and general fatigue.

Furthermore sleep disorders, disorders of the stomach and bowels and cognitive problems such as impaired memory, concentration and thought processing are common and many patients also suffer from dizzy spells. It is believed that approximately 50.000 Danes suffer from the disease, 10-25 % hereof are men.

How is Fibromyalgia diagnosed?

A specialist applies a pressure of 4 kg to 18 specific areas of the body. If the patient experiences pain in at least 11 of these areas, the diagnosis can be made. Also there has to be a history of pain for at least three months and the pain must be dispersed over the entire body.

What causes fibromyalgia?

Fibromyalgia is a complicated, multifactorial disease. This means that there may be many triggering factors and that fibromyalgia develops differently from one person to another.

Research has shown measurable changes of the central nervous system, the hormonal balance and the immune response in fibromyalgia patients.

The connection between cause and effect has not yet been established, but the disturbances that have been found, explain the pain found in fibromyalgia. Thus, the pain can no longer be seen as inexplicable nor undocumented even though the cause for their occurrence is not fully clarified.

These years the most recognized theory is a central sensitivity, which means that the body becomes hypersensitive to certain sensations such as pain and as a result acts like a pain amplifier to stimuli that would not be painful or cause other negative reactions in a healthy person.

What can I do myself?

A multidisciplinary pain treatment is important. Due to the long waiting lists of pain treatment facilities, you may have to take charge yourself, possibly with the aid of your general practitioner.

In case of other concurrent diseases, be they of a physical or mental nature, those should be treated if possible as they may aggravate the symptoms of fibromyalgia.

Smoking may further aggravate the symptoms and complicate the treatment.

The following exercises may also be useful:

√ Relaxation exercises - Fibromyalgia causes muscle tension and thus you may benefit from relaxation exercises.

√ Physical exercises – You need to find the exercise that is best for you and start slowly. Exercising is easier, when you enjoy it.

Ideally you should exercise 30 minutes a day. It is possible to exercise by stages during the day, if that makes it more feasible.

What benefits one, may not benefit the other, but the following kinds of exercises are beneficial to many: walking, hydrotherapy - warm pool exercises, swimming, specifically implemented exercise programs, therapeutic riding, bicycling, low-impact exercises, dancing.

All in all, the best thing is to keep as active as possible and take part in positive and social activities.

√ Psychological help – you may benefit greatly from having talks with a psychologist in case having been diagnosed with a chronic, painful illness is too hard to deal with, however it is important that the therapy is planned according to individual needs.

√ Medical treatment – the traditional medical treatment available may not be adequate and ought to be followed up by physical treatment. Consult with your physician about the optimal treatment.

Tricyclic antidepressants may in some cases have a certain pain relieving effect, but should be discussed

thoroughly with your doctor due to commonly occurring side effects such as weight gain, concentration impairment and dry mouth.

√ Sleep – a good night's sleep is crucial. Relaxation exercises, establishing regular bedtime routines, a good mattress and pillow as well as a calm, cool and dark sleeping environment may prove helpful.

√ Information – The more knowledge you obtain about the disease, the better the possibility of leading a good and active life in spite of the limitations.

The Danish Fibromyalgia Association (Dansk Fibromyalgi Forening DFF) provides current information in order to bring the members up to date.

What does the Danish Fibromyalgia Association, the DFF, have to offer?

The DFF has a nationwide network of contact persons that may counsel and guide you.

The aim of the DFF is to help people to lead as active a life

as possible despite the limitations the disease presents.

Furthermore, the DFF has counsellors with a special knowledge of the circumstances and possibilities of the spacious labour market.

The DFF arrange lectures on living with the disease on a frequent basis and popularise knowledge of the disease by way of the web site and the informative movie "A good and active life with fibromyalgia" amongst other things.

The DFF maintains liaisons with fibromyalgia researchers of international renown and participate in international medical conferences.

The DFF is co-operating with a long row of organisations and associations to create more favourable conditions for people with fibromyalgia.

The Danish Fibromyalgia Association (DFF) is a member of the Federation of Handicap Organizations (De Samvirkende Invalideorganisationer – DSI).

The trade magazine
fibromyalgi.dk

fibromyalgi.dk is published three times yearly. The contents are easily understood without compromising the professional level.

The magazine appeals to patients as well as health staff and other interested parties, forwarding the latest scientific results, treatment suggestions and other matters relevant to the domain.

Special issues

A special issue concerning newly diagnosed patients may be purchased by applying to the DFF secretariat.

www.fibromyalgi.dk

Further information about fibromyalgia and the DFF may be obtained from our web site, where doctors may also find scientific abstracts.

Furthermore, it is possible to sign up for membership online.

Special information for relatives

A special leaflet for relatives has been issued in order to further the information about how it feels to have the

disease. The leaflet may be obtained from DFF secretariat.

The objective of the Danish Fibromyalgia Association:

- to support, guide and inform the members and others
- to further the knowledge of fibromyalgia
- to work towards recognition of the disease on equal terms with other chronic diseases
- to support serious research
- to co-operate with similar associations
- to help the members lead a life as active as possible in spite of the disease

Fibromyalgia is recognized by the WHO and is listed in the ICD-10 classification as 79.9 "Fibromyalgia".

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