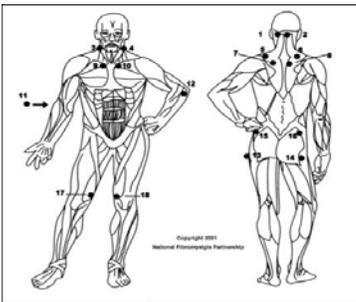


Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia means “muscle and connective tissue pain” and is a poorly understood syndrome. It is characterized by chronic widespread pain, painful response from stimulus that is not normally painful (Allodynia), and heightened and painful response to pressure (Hyperalgesia). Other common symptoms include fatigue, sleep disturbance, irritable bowel syndrome and joint pain. The cause of FMS is unknown but is related to various factors such as genetics, infection, physical/psychological trauma and stress. It has been shown that people suffering from FMS has decreased descending inhibitory pathway to modulate pain. Recent functional MRI studies have shown these changes in FMS. FMS is currently diagnosed by

- 1) Wide-spread pain lasting longer than 3 months
- 2) Having more than 11 out of the 18 tender points criteria set out by the American College of Rheumatology.



Management: While currently there's no cure for FMS, there are various management. The usual pharmaceutical management includes pain medication, NSAIDs, antidepressant and muscle relaxant. However recently a new medication, **Lyrica**, released by Pfizer is the first drug ever approved in USA and Canada for fibromyalgia. It was studied in over 3000 patients with studies done over 6 months therefore is excellent in its safety profile. In addition there is now a second approved drug, **Cymbalta**, an antidepressant with pain relief and may help elevate mood, improve quality of sleep, and relax muscles. Vitamin D supplementation has been shown to decrease pain as well.

Other conservative treatment includes aerobic, flexibility and strengthening exercises. Hydrotherapy has also been shown to be effective exercises that allow easier movement in a gravity-reduced environment. Manipulation, acupuncture and massage therapy have also been shown to be effective in reducing the symptoms.

A qualified physiotherapist is able to provide the appropriate flexibility, strengthening and conditioning exercises. Many patients with FMS presented with forward head posture and protracted shoulder. They can also present with Thoracic Outlet Syndrome and decreased neural mobility. Proper postural correction, stabilization exercises, nerve mobility exercise, IMS have been shown to be effective in restoring the proper biomechanics.

Furthermore, the multidisciplinary team at Canadian Centre for Integrative Medicine can use various injection methods to complement and maximize the effect of the above mentioned therapy. **Botox** is an effective muscle relaxant that can be used to relax the tight muscle and decrease the pain associated with these muscle spasm. For example we can use botox to relax pectoralis minor muscles to corrected protracted shoulders. Recently there's also a new cutting edge injection called PRP (Platelet Rich Plasma) that uses your own blood to heal other associated soft tissue dysfunction.

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