

Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a form of generalized muscular pain and fatigue that affects approximately 3.7 million Americans. The name fibromyalgia means pain in the muscles and the fibrous connective tissues (the ligaments and tendons). Fibromyalgia lacks laboratory abnormalities; instead, the diagnosis depends mostly on a person's report or complaints and feelings. Pain is the most prominent symptom of fibromyalgia. It generally occurs throughout the body, although it may start in one region, such as the neck and shoulders, and spread to other areas over a period of time.

A majority of people with fibromyalgia experience moderate or severe fatigue with lack of energy, decreased exercise endurance, or the kind of exhaustion that results from the flu or lack of sleep. Sometimes the fatigue is more of a problem than the pain. Headaches, especially muscular (tension headaches) and migraine headaches, are common in fibromyalgia. Abdominal pain, bloating and alternating constipation and bladder spasms and irritability may cause urinary urgency or frequency. A person's skin and blood circulation can be sensitive to temperature changes, resulting in temporary changes in skin color.

As a Board Certified Chiropractic Neurologist, I take a different approach to the treatment and prevention of fibromyalgia. After a thorough neurological exam, I determine which part of the nervous system is not functioning properly. In many fibromyalgia patients I may find a high mesencephalic output.

There are three parts to the brain stem: top, middle and lower. The mesencephalon is the top part of the brain stem. A high output of the mesencephalon will cause an increased pulse and heart rate, the inability to sleep, or a waking, fitful sleep. Other symptoms might include urinary tract infections, increased warmth and sweating, and sensitivity to light.

Along with a high mesencephalic output, the fibromyalgia patient may present with a decreased output of the cerebellum. The cerebellum controls coordinated movement and all of the muscles of the spinal column.

No matter what the condition, it is imperative that the chiropractic neurologist performs a thorough and comprehensive exam to determine the exact nature of the patient's condition.

Fibromyalgia patients, as with all chronic (symptoms longer than six months) type patients must be monitored closely, before and after treatments (blood pressure, pulse SpO2). If the patient is not monitored, it is possible to over-stimulate or exceed metabolic capacity. Since the upper part of the brain stem (mesencephalon) is firing at an abnormally high rate, I will want to utilize modalities that will lower the mesencephalic output.

About the Author

Dr. Michael L. Johnson is a Board Certified Chiropractic Neurologist with over twenty years of experience in private practice, over 850 hours of neurological studies, and 3800 hours of postgraduate education. His bestselling book "What Do You Do When the Medications Don't Work? - A Non-Drug Treatment of Dizziness, Migraine Headaches, Fibromyalgia, and Other Chronic Conditions" is available wherever books are sold.