



Control/Tracking Number: 07-A-923-ACR

Activity: ACR Abstract Submission

Current Date/Time: 5/4/2007 4:58:53 PM

Fibromyalgia Patients Report Many Symptoms Other Than Pain and Fatigue

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Abstract:

PURPOSE: People with fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) are far more likely than people without FMS to report symptoms that worry them and are not directly associated with pain and fatigue.

METHODS: An Internet survey, conducted by a FMS community organization, AFFTER (Advocates for Fibromyalgia Funding, Treatment, Education and Research), asked participants about 49 different symptoms. 486 people with FMS and 101 people without FMS completed the questionnaire. The chi-square test of association was used to compare the FMS and non-FMS groups with respect to the percentage reporting each symptom. A 0.01 significance level was used. All tests were two-sided.

RESULTS: FMS respondents were significantly more likely than non-FMS respondents to report 20 of the 49 symptoms:

Symptom	FMS n(%)	Non-FMS n (%)	P-value
Sensitivity to light	334 (69%)	16 (16%)	< 0.001
Sun sensitivity	217 (45%)	16 (16%)	< 0.001
Dizziness	297 (61%)	14 (14%)	< 0.001
Irregular heart beat	179 (37%)	6 (6%)	< 0.001
Balance problems	330 (68%)	17 (17%)	< 0.001
Chronic sore throat	149 (37%)	0 (0%)	< 0.001
Sensitivity to medication	233 (48%)	9 (9%)	< 0.001
Hives and skin sensitivity	208 (43%)	5 (5%)	< 0.001
Dry mouth	306 (63%)	14 (14%)	< 0.001
Frequent runny nose	219 (45%)	9 (9%)	< 0.001
Night sweats	262 (54%)	13 (13%)	< 0.001
Disc problems	227 (47%)	10 (10%)	< 0.001

Memory problems	422 (87%)	33 (33%)	< 0.001
Anxiety	370 (76%)	22 (22%)	< 0.001
Trouble swallowing	203 (42%)	2 (2%)	< 0.001
Vision problems	309(64%)	16 (16%)	< 0.001
Heartburn	241 (50%)	15 (15%)	< 0.001
Restless legs	256 (53%)	24 (24%)	< 0.001

CONCLUSION: People with FMS report a diverse array of symptoms more often than people without FMS. FMS patients often do not realize that these disparate problems may be related to fibromyalgia. Although some patients need to undergo medical evaluation for these symptoms, FMS patients and their medical practitioners may find it reassuring that many others with FMS report similar symptoms.

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Author Disclosure Block: R.S. Katz, None; S. Ferbert, None; F. Leavitt, None.

Category (Complete): 9. Fibromyalgia and soft tissue disorder

Keywords (Complete): fibromyalgia

Additional Keyword (Complete):

Eligibility (Complete):

***Has the data contained in the submitted abstract been presented or accepted for presentation at another meeting prior to the ACR submission deadline of May 3? :**

No