

FIBROMYALGIA

Fibromyalgia overlaps significantly with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. The only difference in diagnostic criteria between the two conditions is the requirement of musculoskeletal pain in fibromyalgia and fatigue in CFS. Approximately 70% of patients diagnosed with fibromyalgia meet all of the diagnostic criteria for CFS.

Therapeutic Approaches: much of the treatment suggestions for CFS are also recommended for patients with fibromyalgia. Treatments specific to fibromyalgia include:

- *Increasing serotonin levels:* the central cause of the pain of fibromyalgia is a low level of serotonin. Chronic low levels of serotonin cause the sensation of pain to be greatly exaggerated.
- *Improve sleep quality:* altered sleep patterns are likely linked with low serotonin levels. Fibromyalgia patients often have reduced REM sleep and increased non-REM sleep. Severity of pain in fibromyalgia patients correlates with rating of sleep quality.
- *Assure adequate magnesium levels:* magnesium is important in the function of serotonin and production of cellular energy, as well as over 300 other enzymatic reactions in the body. Magnesium levels are often low in fibromyalgia patients.

Treatment Summary:

- *d,l-phenylalanine or 5-HTP:* both are precursors to serotonin and can be supplemented to increase serotonin levels.
- *Magnesium*
- *St. John's Wort:* helps with depression and as a synergist with other treatments.