

For Your Information

Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia has a long history for pain patients but a short history in clinical understanding and description. It's been around since the dawn of man but only since about the 1950s have doctors been able to describe and define it. Because of this problem lack of understanding it's been treated as everything from undefined pain, loss of muscle strength and tone, arthritis, rheumatism and even psychosomatic pain (all in the head).

Generally, fibromyalgia is now know to be one of the connective tissue disorders. It's not a disease and there is no bacteria or virus known to be associated with it. In fact, there is no particular lab test which can be done to determine if fibromyalgia actually exists or not. Don't tell that to a sufferer of fibromyalgia, however, because they will be more than able to tell you just how painful the condition is and how badly it affects their lives.

Today, Technically fibromyalgia is defined as a disorder or condition with chronic pain longer than 6 months in duration which is found in a minimum of 9 of 16 different locations in the body. This determination is often done verbally but can be done through specific physical examination. The basic test for fibromyalgia is the tests for trigger points - abnormally strong and sharp pain in the tested area which is increased with mild to moderate pressure. There is sometimes, but not always, a history or trauma about the time the pain began. Generally, it begins with mild pain in one area but spreads to many other parts of the body. Eventually it ends up causing disability. Unfortunately most doctors do not deal with this condition, understand it or know what to do other than prescribe pain relievers.

For most people suffering from fibromyalgia the only course of treatment has been taking stronger and stronger pain relievers, attending support groups on how to live with it, and eventually having to give in to the disability of constant pain throughout the body.

Fibromyalgia is essentially trigger points or chronic micro muscle spasms which don't go away. They become irritated and flare up with any muscle activity. They cause other muscles to alter how they work and eventually develop trigger points, also. Some of these trigger points will have tight fibrous scar tissue associated with them which cause pain when it is stretched which in turn causes the muscle to contract even more. The question of which comes first isn't important. Getting rid of the trigger points is necessary.

A clear understanding of what fibromyalgia is and what it involves gives us an ability to successfully treat this disorder. Our success rate is high with most patients fully recovered or reaching 80% to 90% recovery. Why? Because we understand and treat the trigger points involved with the condition. Unfortunately, until more doctors understand the muscle involvement of trigger points in this disorder it will continue to be one which is poorly treated with conventional pain relievers, muscle relaxants, exercise and support group therapy.

Who do you know that we can help?