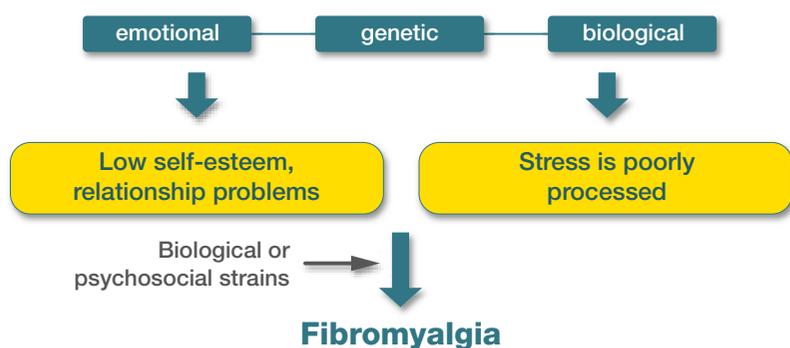


Fibromyalgia

Causes [1, 2]

A

Causes are not completely understood. Disturbances to the individual's processing system appear to play an important role.



Pain and symptoms of disease [2, 3]

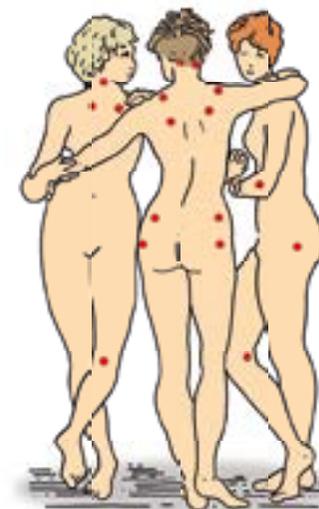
B

At the start: **unspecific complaints** such as weariness and disturbed sleep

Later: pain in the area of the **cervical or lumbar spine, the muscles and soft tissues**

Continuous pain in several regions of the body (right and left, above and below the waist)

Pressure pain at numerous defined pressure points (tender points)



Tender points

Accompanying symptoms [2, 3]

C

Tiredness	Depression
Muscle tension	Headaches
Sleep disturbances	Feeling cold
Extensive pain	Nocturnal sweating
Joint pain	Dry eyes
Morning stiffness	Gastric problems
Paraesthesia	Jaw pain
Anxiety	

Treatment [3, 4]

D

Multimodal pain therapy

- › Information
- › Patient education
- › Medical training therapy
- › Psychotherapy
- › Pain management
- › Relaxation
- › Antidepressants

Physiotherapeutic and physical measures

- › Endurance training (e.g. Nordic walking, cycling)
- › Power training (low to moderate intensity)
- › Functional training (gymnastics and aqua gymnastics)
- › Thermal baths



A Causes [1, 2]

The causes of fibromyalgia are not completely understood. The disease is thought to result from a disturbance in the pain-processing system, due to a reduction of the pain-inhibiting messenger substances and lowering of the pain threshold.

Dysfunction of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, peripheral pain generators and a proinflammatory cytokine profile also appear to play a role.

Early stress is assumed to be an important factor in development of the disease, by leading to disturbances in relationships and self-esteem, and affecting stress processing. Persistent biological or psychosocial strains can then lead to the fibromyalgia syndrome.

B Pain and symptoms of disease [2, 3]

The disease starts with unspecific symptoms such as weariness, sleep disturbances or gastrointestinal complaints.

These are followed later by pain in the area of the cervical or lumbar spine, which progresses to continuous pain in several regions of the body.

Pressure pain at defined pressure points (tender points) is characteristic of the disease.

Violent attacks of pain are interspersed with pain-free intervals. Cold, wet or other stresses and infections can lead to exacerbation of the symptoms.

C Accompanying symptoms [2, 3]

Typical accompanying symptoms develop with the continuous pain. The most common are: tiredness, muscle tension, sleep disturbances, morning stiffness, abnormal sensations, anxiety, depression, headaches, feeling cold, nocturnal sweating, dry eyes, gastric problems and jaw pain.

D Treatment [3, 4]

Multimodal pain therapy (interdisciplinary integration of physical and training exercises, psychotherapeutic and drug treatment techniques) is superior to all individual treatments. It is of the greatest importance in order to prevent the condition becoming chronic.

The mainstays of treatment are education and information, concomitant psychological therapy, coping strategies and relaxation techniques, medical training therapy and drug treatment with antidepressants, which improve the body's inhibition of pain.

Light endurance training in the form of Nordic walking, cycling, cycle spinning training and light power training have proved worthwhile among the physical therapy techniques. Functional training in the form of aqua and dry gymnastics is appropriate, as are thermal baths.

[1] Abeles AM et al. Ann Intern Med (2007) 146: 726- 734.

[2] Bradley LA. (2009) 122(Supp 12): S22- S30.

[3] Turk DC, Wilson HD. J Musculoskel Med (2009) 10

[4] Goldenberg DL et al. J Am Med Assoc (2004) 292(19): 2388- 2395.