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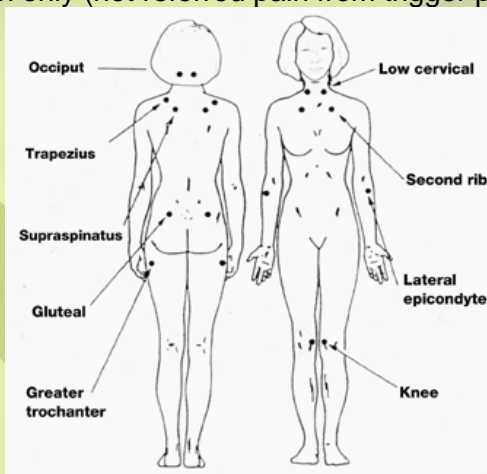
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## FIBROMYALGIA

NOVEMBER 2006 NEWSLETTER

**This month is a collaboration with my good friend and personal homeopathic physician, Allyson McQuinn on the topic of Fibromyalgia (FM for short).** I thought that two different perspectives would be helpful, as I can only treat the symptoms and help diminish pain, whereas Allyson can actually get to the root cause of the syndrome. Please find her article attached to the email by which this newsletter was delivered.

FM is a painful systemic condition that is characterized by widespread muscular pain. It is a non-degenerative, non-inflammatory, non-progressive neurotransmitter dysfunction. FM is diagnosed by 4 kgs of finger pressure on 18 tender points on the body, which are simply the most consistently painful spots from person to person. Of these points, 11 must be positive for local pain only (not referred pain from trigger points).



Just as every person is different, the symptoms of FM vary from person to person, and can change in the same person from day to day, sometimes even from hour to hour. 100% of FM sufferers have muscle and joint stiffness which is usually worse in morning & evenings, and almost all experience fatigue, weakness, and poor sleep. Other possible symptoms may include sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, teeth grinding, intolerance to cold, the sensation of swelling in joints or tissue, anxiety, heart palpitations, pins & needles, dry eyes/mouth, and memory/concentration problems. Other conditions are usually present that further debilitate the FM sufferer, such as Raynaud's phenomenon, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, and severe headaches just to name a few. 70 to 100% are found to have depression, but this is most likely a result of the muscular pain. The cause of FM is still not well understood. The majority of people with FM have had

a history of injury ... sometimes serious but often only minor within the year before the symptoms started.

- Approx. 4 women are affected for every man, and commonly between the ages of 25-45
- Symptoms can be triggered or aggravated by overexertion, lack of exercise, stress & anxiety, depression, poor sleep, trauma, extreme temperature or humidity, infectious illnesses
- It has been repeatedly shown that there is no evidence of actual inflammation; and thus anti-inflammatories do not have an effect.

Massage specific to FM has been found to reduce pain and stress levels, and has been shown to be more effective than TENS machines in improving pain, anxiety, depression, stiffness, fatigue & sleep. This is the power of human touch and kind intent! Some FM people can tolerate and prefer deep tissue massage, but techniques for FM are typically soothing with light to medium pressure, so as to reduce likelihood of increased pain and fatigue. Sessions should start at once a week for 30 minutes, then progressing up to an hour for later sessions. After 4 to 6 sessions, a patient often notices diminished pain, but should not expect it to be eliminated. Regularity of massage is important for lasting benefits, and can be reduced to monthly sessions.

Other typical treatment options are: acupuncture, acupressure, steroid injections, biofeedback, rest, mild exercise, other manual therapies, nutrition, stress reduction, breathing and postural reeducation, warm or hot hydrotherapy, medication (herbal, homeopathic and standard which includes antidepressants, painkillers and muscle relaxants), movement therapies such as Feldenkrais and the Alexander Technique, have all been useful in symptom management.

**I invite you to read Allyson's homeopathic perspective and how she can help. Here is a local support group and site for more information on Fibromyalgia.**

**Local Fibromyalgia Support - Ottawa West (FMS-OW)**

Tel: (613) 721-2082

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Email Coordinator **S.C. Alder** at: [SCA@woman2woman.ca](mailto:SCA@woman2woman.ca)

Web site: <http://fibromyalgia.ncf.ca>



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### Research Resources:

Fibromyalgia: The Muscle Pain Epidemic  
Is it ME by Another Name? (Part 1)© **Leon Chaitow N.D.,  
D.O., M.R.O.;**  
<http://www.healthy.net/scr/Article.asp?Id=587>

Information for Physical Therapists, Devin Starlanyl, M.D.  
<http://fibromyalgia.ncf.ca/>

Clinical Massage Therapy, Fiona Rattray & Linda Ludwig