

Central sensitivity and fibromyalgia

Implication for
clinical practice: a
clinical review

Patients with fibromyalgia and related conditions should understand how the central nervous system (CNS) influences their symptoms. An integrated approach targeting the CNS is crucial, and self-management plays a key role in symptom improvement. Stress reduction techniques are beneficial, and opioids are not recommended in individuals with fibromyalgia or other chronic pain conditions.

Context

This paper outlines a clinical review of fibromyalgia, associated syndromes and comorbid fibromyalgia, and concepts and terms that might make it easier to identify and therefore manage symptoms.

There is an in-depth discussion of the current understanding of the pathophysiology, the development of clinical tools to aid in the recognition and diagnosis of fibromyalgia as well as treatment options.

Methods

A clinical review was conducted on:

- The presentation of fibromyalgia, overlapping conditions and comorbid fibromyalgia.
- The diagnosis of a central sensitivity syndrome such as fibromyalgia.
- Treatment of fibromyalgia and the prognosis for patients.

Results

- The management of fibromyalgia involves an integrated approach of self-management strategies.
- The key non pharmacological strategies include education, exercise, and cognitive-based therapy.
- Pharmacological treatment can also be used to help alleviate symptoms of fibromyalgia but should not be used alone.
- The diagnosis and management of central sensitivity syndromes such as fibromyalgia is physician dependent. Some general practitioners have the expertise and experience to diagnose and manage fibromyalgia whereas others require input from specialists such as rheumatologists particularly in complex cases.
- Fibromyalgia treatment is mostly about self managing the condition and this can improve or stabilise symptoms.

Reference

Mezhov, V., Guymer, E., & Littlejohn, G. (2021). Central sensitivity and fibromyalgia. Internal Medicine Journal, 51(12), 1990-1998.