

What is Fibromyalgia?

'Fibro' meaning fibrous tissues, 'my' meaning muscles, 'algia' meaning aching pain

Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) is a complex chronic condition with a number of symptoms including widespread pain, insomnia, fatigue and body stiffness. FMS produces pain in the soft tissues located around joints and other tissues deep to the skin. FMS is often misdiagnosed, meaning that the diagnosis is missed or that another condition is considered to be responsible for the symptoms. Research is ongoing to determine the underlying causes and origins of FMS.

For many years, FMS was called fibrositis because the symptoms were like those of inflammatory conditions (for example like rheumatoid arthritis without the swollen joints), but in reality this is an inaccurate term as the tissues involved are not characterised by inflammation. It is understood that females outnumber males and that approximately 2% of the population suffers from FMS.

FMS usually consists of diffuse aching or burning almost "head to toe" and is often accompanied by muscle spasm. From day to day the pain will vary in severity and location, becoming very severe in areas like the neck, shoulders, hips and feet (the most commonly used areas).

ACR Criteria and Pain Scales

In 1990 several doctors met under the auspices of the American College of Rheumatology and agreed on new criteria for the diagnosis of FMS. Their proposals included a number of pressure points - 18 in all. If 11 of these really hurt and had long term pain for at least three months, you could be diagnosed with FMS. Symptoms included muscular pain, fatigue, insomnia, joint pains, headaches, restless legs, numbness and tingling, impaired memory, leg cramps, impaired concentration, nervousness and major depression. As time has gone on more and more symptoms have been added to the list, and folk began to think about pain scales and the need to update the criteria. In May 2010 new criteria were published by many of the original team of specialists, including Frederick Wolke, Daniel J Clauw and Muhammed B Yunus. The most important diagnostic variables were the widespread pain index (WPI) and categorical scales for cognitive symptoms, unrefreshed sleep, fatigue and a number of somatic symptoms. The categorical scales were summed to create a symptom severity (SS) scale.

The specialists combined the WPI index and the SS scale to recommend a new case definition of FMS:

- . WPI 7 or more and SS scale 5 or more; or
- . WPI 3 to 6 and SS 9 or more.

The tender points are not mentioned, and the SS scale enables assessment of FMS symptoms severity in persons with current or previous FMS. This means pain will be given more consideration.

Fibromyalgia?

*We know how you feel!
Let us help you to help
yourself!*

Fibromyalgia Support For Surrey and Sussex



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Post: FMSSAS 42 Woodlands Way
Southwater, West Sussex RH13 9HZ

Website: www.fms-sas.co.uk

Helpline: 0844 887 2508

Registered Charity Number 1108454

Fibromyalgia Support for Surrey and Sussex

Membership Application Form

To join and receive your new members pack, **either** fill in this form, detach the page and send it to the address on the front cover -

Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone No:

E-mail:

Or

E-mail fmsas2@gmail.com with these details.

The group issues regular e-Newsletters to members with e-mail addresses and occasional Trustees Newsletters to members, usually by e-mail, or by post if necessary. The membership database is maintained and operated in compliance with the Data Protection Act

About FMSSAS

Fibromyalgia Support for Surrey and Sussex was formed by Jo Fisher in 2003 and became a registered charity in 2005. Sufferers of Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS) often find themselves travelling a long hard road in firstly getting a diagnosis and then being left in the dark on the treatment of the condition and where to turn for information.

Our aims and objectives are to support sufferers and their families by reducing isolation, improving quality of life and by empowering people living with FMS to develop the knowledge, skills and resources needed to secure a positive future. We do this by encouraging the growth of and working with independent support groups throughout the region, and by working to raise awareness of this neglected patient group.

Our website www.fms-sas.co.uk has a wealth of information about FMS and about our charity and the local groups in the region and neighbouring counties. Members also receive a range of publications about FMS.

We have a resource library available to attendees at some meetings or by ordering in advance. We also have a weekly e-Newsletter, which is sent to anyone giving us their email address for the purpose.

Local groups are listed on the website, with meetings, coffee mornings and lunch dates, and sessions for Yoga, Water Exercise etc. especially for FMS patients.

We are here to help you with information, advice and support.

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