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Mid Cheshire Hospitals   
NHS Foundation Trust

# FIBROMYALGIA ONLINE SELF-MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

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## MODULE:6 TOPICAL ISSUES

MSKHUB Online Patient Education Series  
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## Controversies and challenges

- Fibromyalgia is the most commonly encountered chronic widespread pain (CWP) condition in rheumatology. Cohen 2017 Vol. 9(5)
- In comparison to inflammatory arthritis, it can seem ill defined with no clear understanding of the pathology and therefore no specific targeted treatment. Cohen 2017 Vol. 9(5)
- This brief module will focus on some ongoing controversies and challenges highlighted in the literature to propose a new and improved approach to the diagnosis and treatment of Fibromyalgia.
- Doing so, we will explore the social construction of Fibromyalgia from the perspective of health policies, patients, and health professionals involved in their medical attention. Briones-Vozmediano, 2017 Global Health Action VOL. 10

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## What are the topical issues in Fibromyalgia?



- **Fibromyalgia lacks recognition**  
At a political, professional and social level, there is an argument as to Fibromyalgia being constructed as an "invisible women's disease".

There is a need to resolve this lack of recognition by

- implementing specific policies for Fibromyalgia and
- increasing the training and sensitisation of health providers about the impact of this condition on individuals,
- and the existence of gender prejudices biasing the attention.

Briones-Vozmediano, 2017 Global Health Action VOL. 10

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### Topical issues in Fibromyalgia?

- **Whether Fibromyalgia should be considered a discrete condition or part of the chronic wide-spread pain (CWP) spectrum?**

- While understanding of CWP and FM continues to improve, the precise understanding remains unclear and continues to evolve.
- There is a need to balancing the need to avoid over investigation and over medicalisation against missing other diagnoses or under treatment.

Cohen 2017 Vol. 9(5)

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### Topical issues in Fibromyalgia?

- **Recognising the significant role of concurrent psychological diagnoses when present, and confronting the associated stigmatization**

It is important to recognise the significant role of concurrent psychological diagnoses when present, and confronting the associated stigmatisation.

Cohen 2017 Vol. 9(5)

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### Topical issues in Fibromyalgia?

- **Fibromyalgia in the presence of coexisting condition**

More research and clinical guideline support needed to understand the diagnosis and treatment of Fibromyalgia in the presence of coexisting disease, for example Inflammatory Arthritis.

Cohen 2017 Vol. 9(5)

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### Topical issues in Fibromyalgia?

- **More guidance is needed to manage patient expectations in recognising the limitations of the pharmacological treatment, particularly high strength opioids which should be avoided.**

Cohen 2017 Vol. 9(5)

Although the clinical guidelines for the management of Fibromyalgia recommends the non-pharmacological treatment strategies as first line of approach to treatment, there is a growing rate of medicalisation, in the form of prescription of pharmacological therapies and lack of access to non-pharmacological therapies such as patient education, individualised exercise prescription and cognitive behavioural therapy.

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### Topical issues in Fibromyalgia?

- **People with Fibromyalgia struggle communicating their needs to health professionals, employers and friends & family**

A recent focus group findings from people with Fibromyalgia suggested that patients feel the need for health professionals to be more empathetic and knowledgeable about the impact of this condition and that many people with Fibromyalgia are not getting the support they need from clinicians.

Importance of the need for educating the significant others and families was emphasised, as the lifestyle changes they needed to make involved changes to the roles, responsibilities and daily routines of others, which were deemed as a main barrier to making behavioural changes.

Corless et al 2019 Rheumatology

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### Where do you go from here?

- Remember, Fibromyalgia is a long-term condition and therefore the impact of the condition will change as your life evolves and your needs change. This means you need to adapt your approach to self-management, with changing needs of your work, family and other commitments.
- Don't be afraid to seek medical help from your GP and other health professionals when you feel you are not coping with the symptoms of Fibromyalgia; this is what they are trained to do and why there are there for.
- There is always someone there to listen. See list of charities and organisations which, provide help and support for people with Fibromyalgia at the end of this webpage. **You are not alone.**

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### Make use of the resources provided

- There are countless resources available through this online self-management education programme videos, and we have also provided you with online links to the important information concerning how to adapt a healthy lifestyle, where to go for more information on exercise, diet, relaxation and social support for hardship to better cope with the symptoms of Fibromyalgia.
- Make use of this resources to ensure you have access to up-to-date information and latest research into Fibromyalgia** to help with your self-management.

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### Goal Setting – what's next?

- Where do you go from here?
  - Have you got a long-term goal you are still working on?
  - Have you got an action plan to get there?
  - Who will help you to get there?
  - What do you do when you stumble?

**S**pecific  
**M**easurable  
**A**ttainable  
**R**ealistic  
**T**ime-Driven




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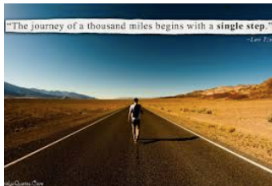
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### Remember

**A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.** Lao Tzu




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## Thank you for listening.



### You have completed the Fibromyalgia Online Self-Management Education Programme

You can revisit this programme any time to access the useful information available on this page.

You can register with the [www.msclub.com](http://www.msclub.com) to create a free online health record to track your symptoms and access to the latest research and updates available to help your self-management journey.

We hope that you have found the programme informative and useful.

All the best.  
MSKHUB Research Team

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