

Greystone Neurology Newsletter

Greystone Neurology and Pain Center
7500 Hugh Daniel Drive Suite 250
Birmingham, Alabama 35242
205-991-3300

Volume 1, Issue 1

Spring 2003

Fibromyalgia Syndrome Is Treatable

Affects 2-4% of the total population

Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS), is characterized by:

History of **widespread pain** for **at least three months**, in **all four quadrants of the body** – upper, lower, right and left, and **pain in at least 11 of 18 tender point sites** on digital palpation.

Pain is the hallmark symptom of FMS. It is usually **worse in the mornings** and can be in the joints, over bone, or over tendons and ligaments. The pain is not necessarily constant and **can wax and wane over the day or a period of time**. The pain can be influenced by stress, psychological state, increased exercise, fever, virus, tissue injury, and insomnia.

Fatigue is an underlying problem with sufferers of FMS and is often chronic. Disordered sleep, light sleeping, or **inability to reach a deep level of sleep** is very common. **Depression** is suffered by a large percentage of FMS patients, caused by inability to perform daily activities, decreased socialization, chronic pain, lack of energy, isolation, inability to work, etc.

continued on page 2

LOSE WEIGHT WHILE TREATING YOUR MIGRAINE

PATIENTS LOSING WEIGHT ON TOPAMAX

Topamax (Topiramate), originally introduced as a medication for treating epilepsy, is now prescribed to **prevent migraine headaches**. In a double-blind study of 469 patients, the group receiving 100 mg. of Topamax daily experienced an average **54% reduction in migraine frequency**. The weight of the participants was also measured for this study with an average 3.8% loss at the same 100 mg. daily dose.

In practice, **patients are losing as much as 15-20% of their body weight**. One of our patients reported losing over 40 pounds in six months with **Topamax** combined with an exercise program and another has lost over seventy pounds. Results, will of course, vary from patient to patient.

Topamax is also effective in treating **neuropathic pain**, which makes it a good choice for diabetics, where the potential weight loss is desirable. It is also used for the treatment of bipolar disorder for **mood stabilization**.

At **Greystone Neurology and Pain Center** we will be happy to discuss this medication for you along with its appropriate uses. As with all medications, **Topamax** is to be **prescribed after careful consideration and evaluation of the particular needs of each patient**. If you would like to consider it as part of your personal treatment regimen, we would be happy to discuss this option with you on your next visit.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 **Fibromyalgia Facts**
- 1 **Topamax for Migraines**
- 3 **Greystone Neurology and Pain Center Staff**
- 3 **Smoking and Back Pain**
- 4 **Headache triggers and Massage Therapy**

Patients complain of **restless leg syndrome, irritable bowel or bladder, abnormal or exaggerated startle reflex, tension headaches, TMJ disease, myofascial pain – sometimes for many years without realizing** these problems are **small parts of a much larger picture.**

The cause of FMS is thought to be a problem of the **inappropriate relay of sensation to the brain.** Ongoing research will tell us what it is, how it should be treated and if it can be prevented. Since it has only recently been accepted by the medical community, many patients have been told **“it is all in your mind” or labeled hypochondriacs.**

At **Greystone Neurology and Fibromyalgia Center** we respect FMS and take it very seriously. **Dr. Hisham Hakim, M.D., M.P.H.,** has treated patients suffering from FMS **for over seven years** and is an advocate of using **comprehensive therapy to suit each patient’s needs.** His goal is to treat all the components of fibromyalgia – not just the musculoskeletal symptoms.

Fibromyalgia Treatment Plan

On your first few visits you can expect us to confirm your diagnosis of FMS by obtaining a thorough **medical history and reviewing records you may have of medical visits or tests** which have been previously been performed. After your neurologic physical exam there may be other tests ordered such as: **laboratory blood tests** to rule out diseases which can mimic FMS, **imaging studies** such as MRI of the head or neck to rule out brain or spine disease, or **nerve conduction tests** to detect nerve or muscle impairment. After the appropriate diagnosis has been made patients assist Dr. Hakim and the staff in preparing a treatment plan.

At **Greystone Neurology and Fibromyalgia Center** we treat FMS *holistically* as the word ‘syndrome’ means a host of problems, not just one or two. We treat patients for **depression, fatigue, lack of energy, weakness, insomnia, arthralgia, myalgia, mood swings, lack of concentration, memory impairment, restless leg syndrome, back and neck pain, dizziness, migraines,** etc. We have effective and proven methods and the willingness to listen to the concerns and needs of patients. Hopefully, **together we can make life less painful and more pleasurable for our patients and their families.**

Resources for patients include **both medical and alternative health modalities.** Patients benefit from medications to relax their muscles and decrease inflammation of tissue. They may also need medicine to help them sleep or decrease depression, or boost their energy. Medications cannot cure a lack of exercise, nutritional deficits, or a demanding lifestyle. **For sufferers of FMS a whole spectrum of therapeutics must be applied.**

We recommend **exercise** – stretching, pool therapy, walking, stationary bicycle riding. Low impact exercise releases endorphins, thereby easing the pain. It also improves sleep, increases stamina and confidence. **Pool therapy** is gentle to joints and releases tight ligaments and tendons. Exercise is great for stress reduction – as is biofeedback. **Biofeedback techniques** can reduce the pain without medication side effects and is effective in reducing migraine headaches, insomnia, and the body’s response to stress.

We also recommend **magnothermia treatments, colonic cleansing, physical therapy, chiropractic treatment, psychotherapy, nutritional support, gentle massage therapy, and muscle stimulation, and can arrange these for our patients as needed.** Another of our treatments is **trigger point injection therapy.** Medication is injected directly into tight, painful muscles to release the strain, thereby reducing pain.

At **Greystone Neurology and Fibromyalgia Center** our most advanced treatment for muscle pain is **MYOBLOC**, or BotulinToxin Type B injectable solution. This medication works to release tight muscle fibers to reduce contraction. The **duration of this effect lasts up to four months and patients tolerate treatment up to three times yearly.** We have had patients remain pain free for six months to a year with **MYOBLOC** injections.

At **Greystone Neurology and Fibromyalgia Center** we understand **Fibromyalgia Syndrome** is painful and chronic. It is also **manageable with the proper treatment and patient involvement.** We work with our patients to formulate healthy goals for lifelong therapeutic benefits.

GREYSTONE NEUROLOGY AND PAIN CENTER STAFF

Dr. Hisham Hakim, M.D., M.P.H., our medical director, welcomes you to **Greystone Neurology and Pain Center**.

Dr. Hakim obtained a **Masters Degree in Public Health** as well as **residency and fellowship in neurology** from the **University of Wisconsin in Madison**.

Dr. Hakim is a **Board Certified Neurologist and a Fellow in the American Academy of Disability Evaluating Physicians**. Over the years he has developed an interest and talent in treating patients with **migraine headaches, back pain, neck pain, stroke, motor vehicle accidents, fibromyalgia syndrome, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and other problems associated with disorders of the nervous system**.

Dr. Darrin T. Wright, BS, DC, is a **board certified Chiropractor** who has been a member of our staff for 2 years. He obtained a **degree in Biology from the University of Alabama in Birmingham** and received his **Chiropractic Degree** and Clinical Training from **Life Chiropractic College in Georgia**. He has an extensive background in **Nutrition and Exercise Training**.

Dr. Wright offers consultation, recommendation, and treatment for **chiropractic problems as well as nutrition and diet counseling**. Many of our patients have met him during a consultation for portable muscle stimulation units, back supports, wrist splints, neck collars, magnotherapy, and ultrasound. **Dr. Wright offers free consultations to help you decide if chiropractic care may benefit you or your family members**.

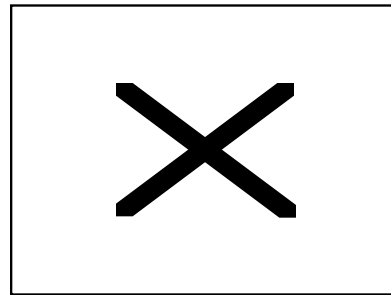
Susan Joiner, MSN, CRNP, has recently joined the staff of **Greystone Neurology and Pain Center**. She received her **Bachelor of Science and Master in Nursing** from the **University of Alabama in Birmingham** and is currently writing her dissertation for a **Phd. in Healthcare Administration**. She is a **Board Certified Family Nurse Practitioner** and has worked in Talladega and St. Clair Counties for the past seven years. As a Nurse Practitioner, **her role will be to evaluate and treat patients, provide patient education and perform clinical research**.

OH, MY ACHING BACK!

SMOKERS HAVE MORE ACHES AND PAINS

If you are a smoker with joint or back pain you might want to reconsider that next cigarette. A recent study in Great Britain of **13,000 adults found smokers reported significantly more episodes of pain in the low back, neck, and extremities than nonsmokers**. They also **experienced higher rates of disability due to chronic pain**. Researchers speculated that tobacco may affect the body's pain sensors. (For more info, check WebMD).

At **Greystone Neurology and Pain Center**, we advocate **smoking cessation due to interference with the healing process**. **Nicotine causes vasoconstriction, thereby decreasing the flow of blood and oxygen to stressed muscles, nerves, and joints**. **Smoking can also cause fatigue which may prompt patients to disregard or decrease their exercise regimen**. **There are many options for cessation therapy available today**. **Talk with your primary healthcare provider about which approach would be appropriate for your lifestyle**.



GREYSTONE NEUROLOGY AND PAIN CENTER

Birmingham 205-991-3300

Sylacauga 256-245-5500

Talladega 256-362-7009

We welcome new patients and your referrals at all locations

THOSE SNEAKY MIGRAINE TRIGGERS!

When exploring the causes of migraines, the easiest and cheapest place to start is diet. Food reactions are a significant contributor to headaches and some **improvement in symptoms, if not remission, can be achieved by eliminating problematic dietary items.** Foods that most commonly induce migraines:

- Cows milk
- Wheat
- Chocolate
- Egg
- Orange
- Rye
- Cheese
- Tomato
- Yellow food dye

Foods like **cheese, beer, and wine** induce migraines in some people because they contain histamines and/or vasoactive compounds that cause blood vessels to expand. **Women tend to react to histamine-containing foods more frequently than men do, on account of a deficiency in an enzyme that breaks histamine down. Taking supplemental B6 may be helpful in this particular deficiency.** Nitrites, which are common ingredients in lunch meats and smoked or cured meats dilate blood vessels and may trigger migraines.

How do you know which foods are your triggers? The avoidance of common triggers is a good way to start. You must eliminate the foods completely for two to six weeks and slowly add them to your diet to identify the culprits. Start with **caffeine, chocolate, nitrates, wine, nutrasweet, food coloring, aged dairy products, and preserved meats. Watch fresh foods for potential pesticides – just wash thoroughly before eating.**

Read labels! Then, slowly, one by one, return to your normal diet – you might identify triggers that have been a problem for quite awhile that have caused frequent headaches.

For more information about headache triggers ask the staff at **Greystone Neurology and Pain Center** to discuss this with you on your next visit.

MESSAGE YOUR WAY TO GOOD HEALTH

RELIEVE STRESS, PAIN, ANXIETY

Massage is one of the oldest of health practices, found in ancient Chinese medical texts written some 4,000 years ago. **In Chinese medicine massage is called acupuncture and is thought to work with the body's lymphatic and nervous systems as well as the blood vessels.** The concept is to remove spasm so that blood can move freely.

Today's **massage therapists are well trained** and better regulated than ever before. In prevention of disease and health promotion, massage can be an adjunct for patients who need medication or surgery to restore wellness and reduce pain. It has been reported that **patients with Fibromyalgia Syndrome sleep better after massage.** There is evidence that massage increases serotonin level - the body's 'anti-pain hormone' and decreases cortisol - the body's stress hormone.

At Greystone Neurology and Pain Center we believe massage can be extremely beneficial for the health of our patients. Several of our patients are not candidates for surgery or cannot tolerate medications and massage is a non-invasive way to relieve stress and pain. Ask the staff to arrange a session or recommend a massage therapist who will fit your needs.