

How scientists have successfully treated fibromyalgia

The fibromyalgia story

Years ago doctors had patients complaining of widespread pain, but could not find anything wrong. It is very un-doctor like to say they knew nothing so they put in the diagnosis manual that if anyone had widespread pain for a while and the tests came back negative it was called "fibromyalgia". This was a boon for doctors and drug companies (1,2)



- doctors got to sound authoritative when they knew nothing
- specialists and testing laboratories make a fortune "diagnosing" this condition
- drug companies are happily selling symptom relieving drugs to patients who will never get better

Then, over a decade ago several scientists worked out what causes fibromyalgia and even successfully treated it, but it takes a while for such knowledge to get through to doctors. For example, it took 14 years from when Penicillin was discovered to when doctors started using it. In the case of the fibromyalgia doctors and drug companies are on a good thing, so they are in no hurry. In this article we'll share with you what the scientists found and what you can do.

It's true

It's true that "fibromyalgia" means "I know nothing". This advice from the American College of Rheumatology confirms:

- diagnosis based on the patients symptoms means is you say you have have widespread soreness
- all they know is "research suggests that the nervous system is involved"
- there are no tests to detect it
- there is no cure
- all they can offer is medications to reduce the symptoms

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Fast Facts

- Fibromyalgia affects two - four percent of people, women more often than men.
- Fibromyalgia is not an autoimmune or inflammation based illness, but research suggests the nervous system is involved.
- Doctors diagnose fibromyalgia based on all the patient's relevant symptoms (what you feel), no longer just on the number of tender places during an examination.
- There is no test to detect this disease, but you may need lab tests or X-rays to rule out other health problems.
- Though there is no cure, medications can reduce symptoms in some patients.
- Patients also may feel better with proper self-care, such as exercise and getting enough sleep.

The scientist's understanding of fibromyalgia

Sensitisation of the nervous system

Scientists have found that fibromyalgia is caused by your nervous system being bombarded by other pain signals over a long period of time until it becomes sensitised. When this happens normal stimuli becomes painful, painful stimuli are amplified, and because the nervous system controls most of your body's functions you get may seemingly unrelated symptoms (3,4). They found the major cause of this pain that bombards the nervous system to be (myofascial) trigger points. We'll discuss them later, but let's take a step by step look at fibromyalgia.

How fibromyalgia forms

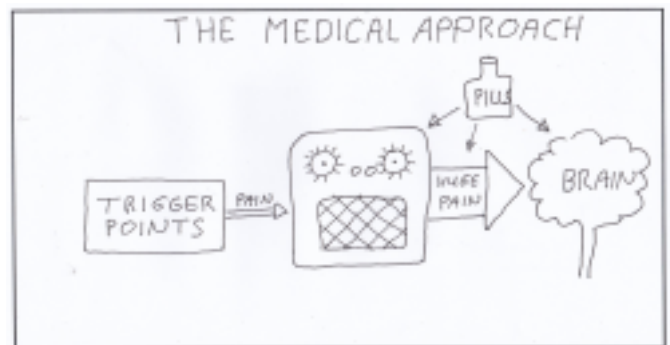
This diagram shows how pain from undiagnosed or inadequately treated trigger points bombard the nervous system until it becomes sensitised. Once sensitised the nervous system acts like a big amplifier, so small pain becomes large pain. Trigger points don't show up in medical tests and are largely unrecognised by doctors so they "diagnose" fibromyalgia and tell you to take symptom relieving drugs. The drug companies are very happy.



Trigger points sensitise the nervous system

Medical treatment for fibromyalgia

The medics recognise that the nervous system has become sensitised, and that the brain is receiving massive pain signals. Their solution is to have a shopping list of drugs and therapies that reduce pain and reduce the sensitivity of the nervous system.

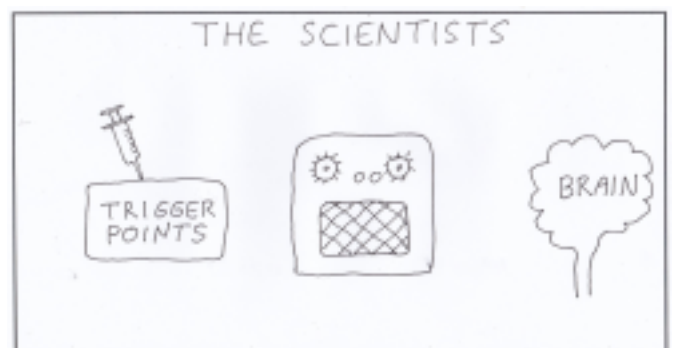


Medics treat the sensitisation and pain

How the scientists treated fibromyalgia

The way scientists treated fibromyalgia was to simply inject the trigger points with anaesthetic. That stopped them bombarding the nervous system with pain so it stopped acting like an amplifier and the fibromyalgia faded away (5).

Injecting trigger points with anaesthetic does not have a long lasting effect. It is excellent for investigating and proving a theory, but not a permanent solution. The permanent solution is to eliminate trigger points.



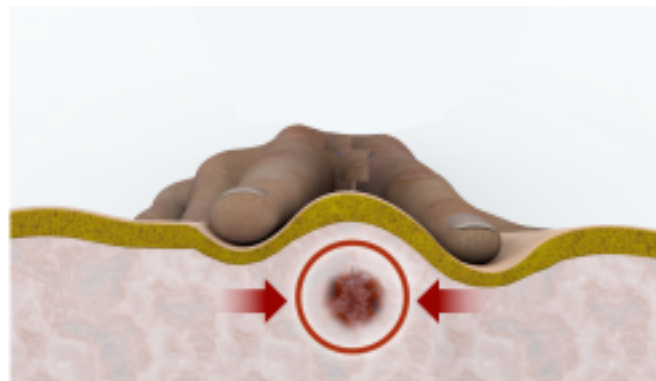
Scientists treated the cause of pain

Trigger points

The scientists found that eliminating the pain from trigger points relieved fibromyalgia, so eliminating the trigger points should go a long way towards eliminating fibromyalgia, so let's look at what trigger points are and how they are treated.

What are trigger points

Trigger points are those tender lumps in muscles that shoot pain when pressed upon. Although they are easily found by therapists and arguably the biggest cause of pain such as back, neck and shoulder pain they do not show up in standard medical tests and are barely mentioned in medical journals. As a consequence pain from these too often goes undiagnosed and/or inadequately treated. This allows them to bombard the central nervous system over the long time necessary to cause sensitisation.



Trigger points are the tender lumps in muscles therapists find

The treatment of trigger points

We have a lot of other information on this subject. Please see below for links. However, the key issue is that they need repeated therapy over time. The use of vibration massage is the only very effective therapy we are aware of that can easily be self applied, making the large number of applications necessary convenient and affordable (6-8).

Video information: https://youtu.be/3AZpJ_kHLVM

Article: <https://www.drgraeme.com/articles/2020/08/trigger-point-treatment-deactivation-or-elimination>

Special considerations

- The treatment of trigger points prior to the development of fibromyalgia requires a process over time.
- Once fibromyalgia has developed we have the following further considerations.

The condition will have been there longer, hence be more entrenched and harder to treat. Sensitisation will cause patients to be less tolerant to treatment.

Concluding remarks

Once fibromyalgia develops treating the underlying cause becomes a lot more difficult, but the only other choice is a lifetime of suffering and symptom relieving medications. It would be far better if trigger points were properly diagnosed and treated before this happens.

References

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