

WELLNESS WATCH



Help For People With A Perplexing Disease

by Tyler Cymet, D.O.

(NAPSA)—Researchers have found a new way of looking at a disease that's been puzzling people for a long time.

Now known as fibromyalgia, the condition has been called “yuppie flu” and “chronic pain syndrome” among other things. It is difficult to diagnose, difficult to control and difficult to treat.

Fibromyalgia is characterized by widespread, diffuse aching and muscle stiffness, accompanied by fatigue and sleep disturbance, generally lasting three months or more. The chronic pain and sleep deprivation accompanying fibromyalgia can cause bouts of depression. One of the key criteria is pain in at least 11 of 18 particular points on the body when these are touched.

People with fibromyalgia will feel “off” or uncomfortable if the temperature varies too much. Most people are comfortable when the temperature is 68 to 80. People with this disease may only be comfortable with a temp between 72 and 75, and the other temps will be sensed as a pain, not just too cold or hot. Same with barometric pressure changes.

Between 80 and 90 percent of people with fibromyalgia are women between the ages of 20 and 60. Between two and five percent of the population suffers from the disease.

There is hope however. Patients can set small, achievable goals for themselves and modify how they experience the world. While many drug treatments exist no one med-



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ication works for everyone, nor does any work forever. Frequent medication changes sometimes help. So can relaxation therapies including yoga and tai chi chu'an. Heat and cold can relieve certain symptoms and gentle aerobic conditioning can provide some relief as well.

People with fibromyalgia are typically hard-driving, people who truly want to get better. They can learn more about their condition from the Arthritis Foundation, www.arthritis.org as well as from their doctor of osteopathic medicine (D.O.).

D.O.s are fully licensed physicians able to prescribe medication and perform surgery. They treat people, not just symptoms.

To learn more about D.O.s and osteopathic medicine, visit the American Osteopathic Association's Web site at www.aoa-net.org or call toll-free 1-800-621-1773.

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