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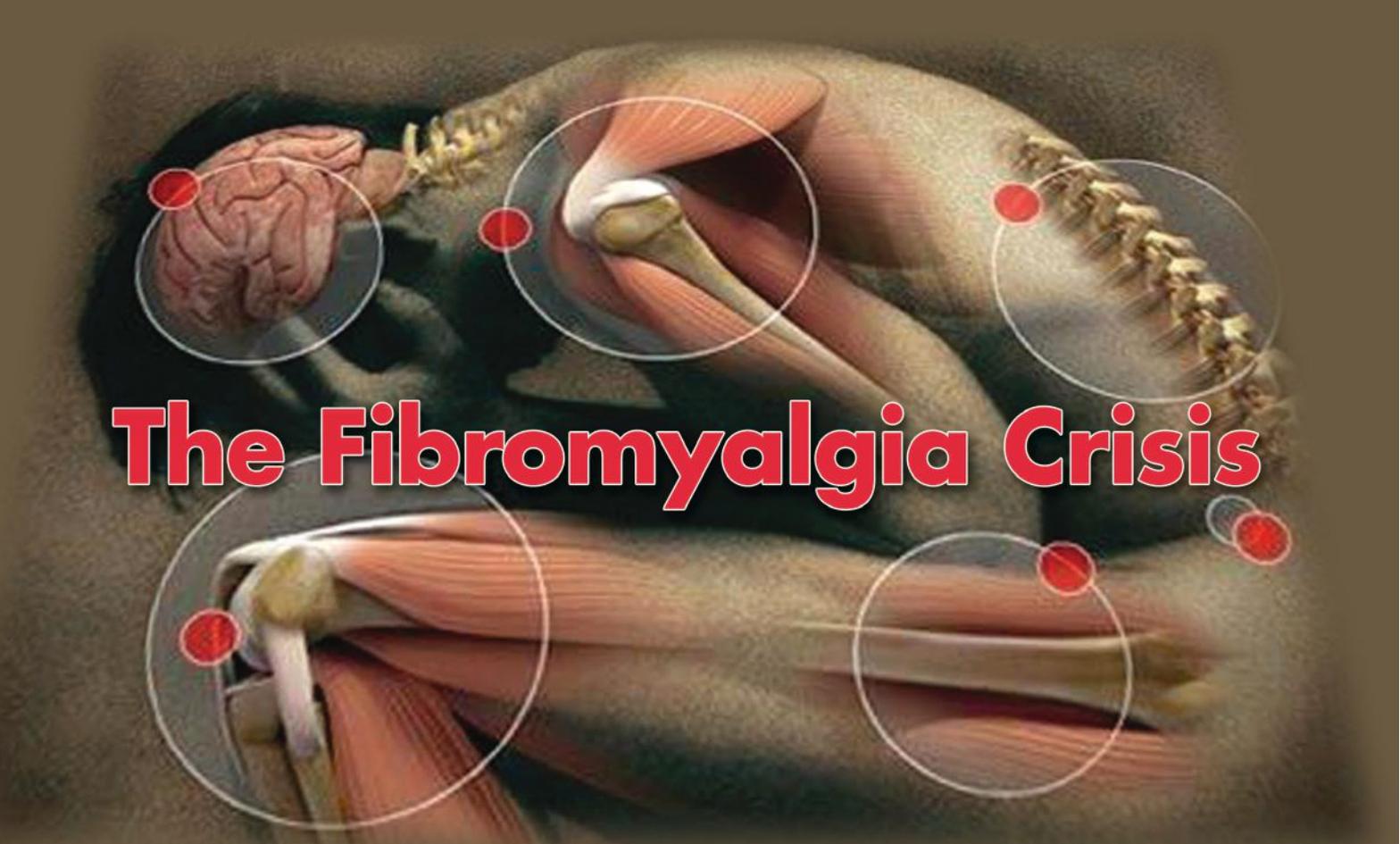
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# The Fibromyalgia Crisis

By Kate Quackenbush

*Practitioners recognizing their patients' suffering can offer proven natural solutions for their pain, energy and fatigue problems.*

**F**ibromyalgia is a common and complex chronic pain disorder that affects people physically, mentally and socially. According to the National Fibromyalgia Association, it is a syndrome rather than a disease. Unlike a disease, which is a medical condition with a specific cause or causes and recognizable signs and symptoms, a syndrome is a collection of signs, symptoms and medical problems that tend to occur together, but is not related to a specific, identifiable cause.

Fibromyalgia is characterized by chronic widespread pain in muscles, ligaments and tendons, multiple tender points, abnormal pain processing, sleep disturbances, fatigue and often, psychological distress. For those with severe symptoms, fibromyalgia can be extremely debilitating and can interfere with basic daily activities.

Further, according to Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, medical director of the Fatigue and Fibromyalgia Practitioners Network, who has been counseling patients for 38 years, fibromyalgia represents an energy crisis

where people are spending more energy than they are able to make and essentially blow a fuse called the hypothalamus.

"This can result from anything that increases energy demands (e.g. infections or autoimmune diseases such as lupus) or decreases the ability to make energy (e.g. nutritional or hormonal deficiencies)," he said, noting that fibromyalgia reflects a mix of immune hyperfunction, over time leading to immune exhaustion with poor effectiveness. "Two percent of the population has a severe fibromyalgia and another two percent has an intermediate form. This has risen significantly over the last 10 to 20 years."

In fact, the prevalence of fibromyalgia is estimated at 2 to 4 percent of the population (95 percent confidence interval [95 percent CI] 1.4, 2.7) for both sexes, 3.4 percent (95 percent CI 2.3, 4.6) for women, and 0.5 percent (95 percent CI 0.0, 1.0) for men.<sup>1</sup> The prevalence of the syndrome increased with age, with highest values attained between 60 and 79 years (>7.0 percent in women). It is estimated that six to eight million people in the United States suffer from fibromyalgia. Some studies reveal that about 80 percent of

patients are women, while others note the female to male incidence ratio at approximately 9:1.<sup>2</sup>

"Where infections represented the major killers in the 19th century, and heart disease and cancer in the 20th century, the rising epidemic of immune and autoimmune diseases (including fibromyalgia, hypersensitivity and lupus) will be the most prominent source of death and disability as we move into the 21st century," said Dr. Teitelbaum.

## Dismissive Diagnosis

There is no agreed-upon cause of fibromyalgia. According to Ronit Arginteanu, Esq., COO/regulatory and legal affairs with New Jersey-based Alquemiste LLC, manufacturer of Ateevia Botanica, physical injuries, emotional trauma or viral infections may trigger the disorder, but no one trigger has proven to be a cause of primary fibromyalgia.

"Many experts believe that fibromyalgia is a chronic pain condition brought on by several abnormal body responses to stress. The main symptom of fibromyalgia is widespread pain, followed by chronic fatigue," he said, adding that there is a list of other

potential symptoms a patient could present, such as memory problems (“fibro fog”), headaches, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and others. This, however, presents a problem when it comes to diagnosis.

“A diagnosis of fibromyalgia can be tricky because it isn’t the only condition with widespread pain. And patients with other conditions also have chronic fatigue,” said Arginteanu. “Moreover, fibromyalgia is hard to diagnose because of the tendency for groups of symptoms to occur together in fibromyalgia patients. But the groups will not be the same for everyone. So not everyone with fibromyalgia will have all the same symptoms.”

Furthering the controversial diagnosis—when it is diagnosed at all—is the fact that so many women are afflicted, according to Dr. Teitelbaum.

“Unfortunately, most doctors still have the abusive perspective that if they do not know what is wrong with the patient, then the person is crazy. This has resulted in more than 80 percent of people with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), and is painful cousin fibromyalgia, being misdiagnosed with things like depression, neuroses or having the illness attributed to their simply being female,” he said.

It has been the experience of Dr. Frank King, founder and president of North Carolina-based King Bio, Inc., which offers more than 160 symptom-specific, practitioner-only homeopathic medicines, that patients are often told that his or her symptoms are “all in your head,” and prescribed antidepressants, NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) or muscle relaxers.

“It’s unfortunate when a doctor is so hurried that if the tests show nothing, then the problem must be the patient’s fault,” he said. “People in pain are desperate for relief. This, unfortunately, may cause them to try products that carry harmful negative side effects or that provide no relief at all.”

Dr. Teitelbaum explained that most often [sufferers] turn to OTCs such as Advil or Tylenol, and physicians prescribe Prozac and other antidepressants. “Neither of these work well and all can be toxic (especially the Tylenol, which depletes the key antioxidant glutathione) leading people to search for other options,” he said, adding that with three new pain medications being FDA-approved for fibromyalgia, and the drug companies spending \$210 million year advertising these to both the public and physicians, these medications, as well as the

diagnosis of fibromyalgia, have been getting increased publicity. “Though a little bit helpful, they still represent a modestly effective Band-Aid.”

But as awareness of fibromyalgia has grown, so have the downsides of conventional treatment options, leading sufferers toward more natural alternatives. “That’s why we can attribute the estimated eight to 10 percent annual growth in natural/holistic pain industry,” said Arginteanu. “People are looking for safer remedies.”

## Topical Treatments

Topical BioMedics Inc. in New York has been supplying Topricin Pain Relief and Healing Cream technology to practitioners and their patients since 1994. The company recognized a void in the marketplace as there were few—if any—truly safe and effective OTC pain relief products for the millions of people suffering in chronic pain, in particular, women, according to Lou Paradise, president and chief of research.

“When women applied Topricin to the common 18 tender points, the vast majority reported pain relief so sufficient that they reduced or eliminated all OTC painkillers. They reported being able to sleep through the night for the first time in years and experienced a return of energy levels,” he said. “Most importantly, the episodes and duration of fibromyalgia events were dramatically reduced or eliminated.”

The three Topricin products contain a unique combination of homeopathic bio-medicines formulated to help the body detoxify the painful area where they are applied and get oxygenated blood back into the cells. This has a soothing effect in the underlying tissue and calms pain by enhancing and maximizing the healing response, Paradise explained. Further, Topricin is the only product in the category that has patents for the treatment of pains associated with neuropathy and fibromyalgia.



Ateevia Botanica PRIME is another topical alternative that can effectively manage pain, thus enabling patients to be more mobile, which can lead to lifestyle choices that increase exercise and decrease depression, without any concern for side effects, according to Arginteanu.

PRIME is comprised of natural botanical ingredients, such as pumpkin (beta carotene and omega-3 and -6 fatty acids), borage (gamma linolenic acid), poke root (*Phytolacca decandra*), sunflower and safflower, that suppress molecules that cause inflammation in joints and other tissues. Aside from the unique combination of ingredients, the company’s production process sets PRIME apart.

“Our trade-secreted technology has allowed us to magnify the efficacy of Ateevia’s essential extractions. PRIME was tested by a major independent university hospital for effectiveness and safety. Findings of a clinically controlled study show that PRIME helped to decrease inflammation and pain and improve mobility in people complaining of inflammation-based pain by more than 85 percent on average,” said Arginteanu, adding that the product has also earned the Ashley Koff Approved stamp of quality nutrition for optimal health.

## Supplemental Options

Dr. King with King Bio has found that opening the detoxification channels is a key component to the successful treatment of fibromyalgia. “When the liver, lymph and kidneys are functioning poorly, and toxins and stress are high, it’s no wonder that the body develops a radical alarm system to get our attention,” he said. “[The body] needs help, not to have its alarm disconnected so we aren’t bothered (as some drugs do), but re-set the body bio-energetically.”

King Bio offers a number of products in its SafeCareRx line that have proven helpful for fibromyalgia, including its detoxes (Liver Detox, Lymph Detox, Blood & Kidney Detox and Heavy Metal Detox) and its Arthritis &