

Have your physician diagnosed you with fibromyalgia (FM)?

Fibromyalgia is a common syndrome in which a person has long lasting, body-wide pain and tenderness in their joints and muscles. Pain is the main symptom of fibromyalgia. It may be mild to severe. Other common FM symptoms include memory and concentration problems, numbness and tingling in hands and feet, palpitations, fatigue, and frequent headaches just to name a few. Fibromyalgia is most common among women aged 20 to 50

Who are we?

The Nerve Injury Unit, Dept of Neurology at Massachusetts General Hospital is a clinical and research laboratory dedicated to the clinical diagnosis and research on chronic pain. We are trying to study FM patients to learn about the causes of FM to improve diagnosis and treatment.

What does the study involve?

In one or two visits to our laboratory, you will undergo two tests for nerve damage; Autonomic function testing and Neurodiagnostic skin biopsy.

Autonomic function testing (AFT) consists of four separate tests that are routinely used by physicians to diagnose peripheral nerve conditions. In this test, we monitor blood pressure, heart rate, deep breathing and sweat production. You will be lying down during most of this testing. Subjects may be instructed to avoid certain foods, and specific medications, as is typical for these types of tests, up to 24 hours prior to testing.

Since small fiber damage cannot be measured, the only way to diagnose it is by biopsy. The standard way of detecting damage to small-fibers is to count how many there are within a tissue biopsy and to compare to expected values. The simplest

way to do this is using skin biopsies taken under local anesthesia. The small nerve fibers penetrate into the skin so the skin can be biopsied rather than a nerve itself. The skin biopsies are turned into microscope slides that are specially labeled to show the nerve fibers within. Their numbers are counted and compared to normal values to determine if there is any nerve damage. A 3mm biopsy, (the size of a pencil tip) is removed just above your ankle. Degeneration or dysfunction of nerve endings in the skin maybe an indicator of a neuropathic condition, the skin biopsy will allow us to study your nerve endings.

In addition to these two tests, we will also ask you to answer a few surveys pertaining to you level of pain, and general well being.

Who can participate in this study?

Any man or woman over the age of 18, who has the diagnosis of Fibromyalgia. (We may ask for proof from your doctor.) If you choose to participate, you will receive \$100.00 upon completion of the study. You may also choose to simply volunteer for the study. We will pay for parking costs at the MGH garages.

This is *NOT* a treatment study.

There are no medications or new procedures being tested. We do not stop or change any medications your doctor may have prescribed.

Whom can I contact about the study?

If you are interested in more information about this research study, please call The Nerve Injury Unit at 617-726-9391 and talk to one of our study staff, or email us at NerveUnit@partners.org



MASSACHUSETTS
GENERAL HOSPITAL

Fibromyalgia

Do you or someone you know,
suffer from fibromyalgia?



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Partners Human Research Committee
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