

Fibromyalgia true  
disease or make  
believe one  
philosophy essay



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The Fibromyalgia syndrome also known as FMS is a rheumatic condition which is often misunderstood or not diagnosed. Some doctors say Fibromyalgia isn't a true disease, and that the pain 'fibromyalgia patients' have is not real. The disease did not have a name until 1990, but since more people appear to have the symptoms of this disease in question some doctors started to research it. Since some of them claimed to have biochemical evidence to support the patients their pains a controversy formed... Is fibromyalgia a true disease or a make-believe disease?

## **What is Fibromyalgia?**

First of all, what is Fibromyalgia? As far as doctors know, fibromyalgia is a chronic condition which cannot be cured. People with FMS undergo daily pains in their tenderness muscles, stiffness, tenderness joints (between muscles), sleepless nights, depressions and anxiety. Those pains are often located around the neck, shoulder, back, knees and hips of the patient. As already mentioned FMS is often seen as a rheumatic condition, which often have the same symptoms. The only difference is that FMS does not cause damage to the internal organs, and other rheumas do (such as arthritis). The cause of FMS is still not known.

## **'Fibromyalgia is a make-believe disease'**

The first side of the controversy says that fibromyalgia is not a true disease. So says Frederick Wolfe, who is one of the most cited fibromyalgia researchers. In 2009 he wrote: 'the tendency to respond with distress to physical and mental stressors is part of the human condition. – labeling fibromyalgia as a "disease" simply legitimizes patients' sickness behavior, slowing their recovery and harming them.' (Dr. Frederick Wolfe and fellow <https://assignbuster.com/fibromyalgia-true-disease-or-make-believe-one-philosophy-essay/>)

researchers, 2009) . With this he the former writer of the American College of Rheumatology outlines for the diagnosis ' Fibromyalgia' claims that FMS is a reaction to economic and social stress. With which he says that the symptoms are part of every human's normal life. Other scientists clame that Fibromyalgia is an invented disease. Invented by psychiatrists to sell sleeping pills, and other psychiatric drugs. Doctors also say that vague complaints of a disease do not add up to a disease. Since the diagnosis of Fibromyalgia can not be proved by blood tests, or other biological tests and there are no biological or environmental causes for the disease, some doctors say it basically can't be a disease.

### **' Fibromyalgia is a true disease'**

Since this is a controversy, there are also doctors who say that fibromyalgia is a true disease. As mentioned in the introduction of this essay, doctors went to reasearch the disease. So did Dr. E. Guedj, he took brainscans of 20 women with Fibromyalgia and 10 without. He concluded out of his results that the brains of women with Fibromyalgia all showed abnormalities in bloodflow through the brain. In some parts of the brain the blood flow was below normal, and in some parts of the brain it was far above normal. The women without fibromyalgia did not show abnormalities in the brain. He also let all the participiants answer questions to assess measures of pain, anxiety, depression and disability. Those answers were for all fibromyalgia patients almost the same, but did not differed that much with the results of the women without the condition. Therefore anxiety, depression and disbility could not be linked to the abnormalities in blood flow. Those results most likely point to fibromyalgia being a true disease.(Dr. E. Guedj, Nov. 3 2008,

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Research to abnormalities of blood flow in brain). Many doctors also say that Fibromyalgia is a disease because the World Health Organization (WHO) has recognized the disease for many years. Other doctors, one of them is Dr. I. Jon Russels, claim that there is a biochemical evidence to support patients their claims of what they feel (Dr. I. Jon Russels, March 3, 2001, interview with Janice Billingsley). Since a few years the diagnosis ' fibromyalgia' can be given by a doctor when all the patient's symptoms satisfy the outlines written by the ACR (American College of Rheumatology).

### **When is a disease a disease, and who decides that it is?**

This controversy also carries huge ethical aspects. First of all, who decides that a series of symptoms form an actual disease? And who decides whether different conditions are not diseases but conditions? What is the difference between those conditions and diseases? It can't be that conditions are chronic and diseases will eventually leave the body since we know chronic diseases and temporary conditions as well. Who decides that a disease or condition is mental and not physical? What if scientific limits block fellow research to a disease, which means nothing physical can be found, but might be present, does this automatically mean that the patient has a mental ailment?

### **How does the controversy influence patient's social lives?**

Since the Fibromyalgia controversy got more publicity and interest of doctors, many people within the social environment of the patient follow the controversy. This means that they might form conclusions such as ' She exaggerates. It is all in her head. ' This might make other people, also within the social environment of the patient, think that the patient does not really

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feel the pains he or she claims to experience and feel. This might cause that the patient's contacts might find her implausible, and do not trust her or take her seriously. This is emotionally a heavy thing to deal with. Therefore many doctors, but also patients, think it is important that there is more intelligibility and understandability around the syndrom/disease/condition.

## **Conclusion**

Fibromyalgia is a pain condition from which more and more people suffer. The patients of fibromyalgia experience pains in their joints, muscle(s) stiffness and undergo depressions, sleepless nights and anxiety. But since it got its name doctors have been hesitating about the 'disease' its existence. Some doctors claim that FMS is a mental reaction on social and economical stress and social anxiety. And probably is a physical reaction on what many people experience on daily basis. Some doctors also say that the by the WHO (world Health organization) recognized disease can't be a disease since it does not have any environmental or biological causes, and cannot be proved by biological tests. Others say that fibromyalgia is a disease. Since some researchers have found brain abnormalities in the brains of fibromyalgia patients they claim that it is most likely a disease in combination with the other symptoms of fibromyalgia. Also, other doctors claim to have found biochemical evidence to the existence of fibromyalgia. There is also the fact that it is very difficult to decide when a series of symptoms, or a physical pain condition can be called a disease. Who is allowed to do so? And there might be another problem based on the development of our science. There might be a physical prove of the existence of fibromyalgia, but we might not have the equipment yet to see

it. Which means that scientific limitations block the research to the condition. It is important that more intelligibility and understandability forms around the syndrom. Since it might affect the social lives of the patients adding a huge emotional deal to the pains they already have to deal with. Out of this essay I can conclude that we need a scientific 'prove' to solve this controversy and to say whether the disease exists or not. But to make this 'prove' approachable more complex scientific apparatus have to be invented and more observations of the patients' pains need to be researched.