

What does the assessment clinic involve?

The aim of the clinic is to discuss with you what type of support you need. It will involve meeting with a specialist pain physiotherapist and a clinical pain psychologist.

We understand that many people find that their symptoms can impact on their ability to move, exercise and carry out everyday activities. We know that many people can find that their symptoms impact on how they are feeling emotionally in themselves

The assessment will ask you about:

- How your symptoms have been affecting you physically and emotionally
- Which treatments you have found helpful in the past, and which have not been helpful.
- How you are currently managing your condition as part of a self-management approach?
- Are there other interventions you are hoping to try?
- How you would feel about being part of a group?

We appreciate that some people worry that we will not believe them or say that their symptoms are 'all in the mind'. We can reassure you that this is not the case and we do believe your symptoms are real.

We will listen to what you say and once we understand more about how things are for you we will then be able to direct you to the most suitable service for your needs.

Before your meeting with us you will be sent a pack of questionnaires. These help us to understand your pain situation more completely and may be used with your consent as part of ongoing service evaluation.

Your appointment may last for around 1 to 1.5 hours and you are welcome to bring someone else along with you if you wish.

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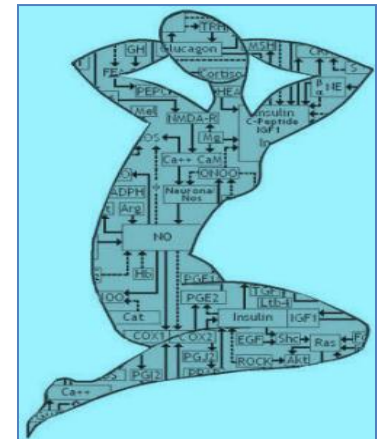
Coming to Hospital? Remember we're smoke free



PATIENT INFORMATION



Chronic Widespread Pain & Fibromyalgia Syndrome Therapy Assessment Clinic



Adapted from artwork by Anne Félicité

Chronic Widespread Pain (CWP) & Fibromyalgia Syndrome (FMS)

For some, people pain can become widespread throughout many parts of the body. Such pain becomes persistent, though it may fluctuate in severity & level over time.

Along with pain, people can experience a range of other symptoms including one or more of the following*:

- Non-refreshing sleep
- Fatigue
- Muscle stiffness/weakness
- Headache
- Temporomandibular (jaw) joint dysfunction
- Irritable bladder
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Depression/anxiety
- Difficulty with concentration & memory and word finding.

Since these symptoms can occur with a range of conditions, blood tests and other investigations are generally used to exclude other diagnoses (such as rheumatological and neurological disorders) that might explain these symptoms. This can take some time and be a difficult experience

Once other conditions have been 'ruled out' a diagnosis of 'chronic pain' can be given. The diagnosis of 'Fibromyalgia Syndrome' can be given where a particular pattern and severity of different symptoms occurs.

*Not an exhaustive list. For further info visit <http://www.sdht.nhs.uk/aboutus/services/pain/service/usereconnect2life.php>

What causes Persistent Pain Conditions?

The precise cause of CWP/FMS is not completely understood. Research into pain conditions has focused on several theories in the following areas:

- Changes in the way the autonomic nervous system works.
- Changes in the way the central nervous system 'makes sense' of nerve messages.
- Changes in body chemistry including neurotransmitters, hormones & other aspects of the neuroendocrine system.
- Sleep disturbance
- 'Triggering' events such as trauma, infection, surgery, physical and emotional stress.

Which treatments help?

Unfortunately there is currently no treatment that completely takes away the symptoms of CWP/FMS.

However, there is good evidence that a combination of appropriate medications & self-management strategies can help – particularly those that help people find ways of coping with activity, exercise and emotions.

Chronic Widespread Pain and Fibromyalgia are not conditions that automatically 'get worse' over time.

Finding the right management approach for each individual person is very important.

The following self-management techniques are **strongly** recommended:

- Stretching
- Strengthening exercises
- Aerobic exercise
- Qi gong or Tai chi
- Relaxation/mindfulness meditation techniques
- Stress/anxiety management
- Activity management
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapies

There is **mixed evidence** for therapies such as:

- Hypnotherapy
- Physiotherapy (massage, manual therapy)
- Osteopathy
- Acupuncture
- Homeopathy and dietary management
- Sauna and thermal baths

These tend to have short lived impact and are therefore only recommended as part of a self-management approach.

There is **no clear evidence** for the following:

- TENS
- Local heat treatments
- Hydrotherapy
- Electrotherapy
- Food supplements