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Patient perspectives on the impact of fibromyalgia

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Abstract

Objective

The objective of this study was to elicit and assess important symptom domains and the impact of fibromyalgia on patients'™ quality of life and functioning from a patient's perspective. The intention was to collect this information as part of an overall effort to overcome shortcomings of existing outcome measures in fibromyalgia.

Methods

This was a qualitative study in which six focus group sessions with 48 women diagnosed with fibromyalgia were conducted to elicit concepts and ideas to assess the impact of fibromyalgia on their lives.

Results

The focus groups conducted with fibromyalgia patients identified symptom domains that had the greatest impact on their quality of life including pain, sleep disturbance,

that had the greatest impact on their quality of life including pain, sleep disturbance, fatigue, depression, anxiety, and cognitive impairment. Fibromyalgia had a substantial negative impact on social and occupational function. Patients reported disrupted relationships with family and friends, social isolation, reduced activities of daily living and leisure activities, avoidance of physical activity, and loss of career or inability to advance in careers or education.

Conclusion

The findings from the focus groups revealed that fibromyalgia has a substantial negative impact on patients' lives.

Practice implications

A comprehensive assessment of the multiple symptoms domains associated with fibromyalgia and the impact of fibromyalgia on multidimensional aspects of function should be a routine part of the care of fibromyalgia patients.



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Keywords

Fibromyalgia; Patient focus group; Symptom domains; Quality of life

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