

EULAR
02.06.22
4.40PM CEST
Kilchberg,
Switzerland

NEW DATA ALIGN WITH EXISTING EULAR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIBROMYALGIA MANAGEMENT

New data presented at the 2022 EULAR Congress

Patients with fibromyalgia suffer from high symptom burden and few available treatments. This condition is often found among patients newly referred to rheumatic outpatient clinics. It is well described that fibromyalgia patients have increased use of the secondary health care facilities. In line with recommendations from EULAR – the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology – timely and coordinated effort across medical specialties could reduce diagnostic delay, facilitate management, and reduce health care utilization in this population. Furthermore, mindfulness and acceptance-based interventions could deliver small improvements in pain, fatigue, and self-efficacy.

Dr Philip Lage-Hansen and colleagues used the EULAR Congress to share their new data on the prevalence of fulfilment of survey-based criteria for fibromyalgia among 248 newly referred patients in a rheumatic outpatient clinic. This observational cohort study also aimed to compare the use of secondary health care services between survey-based fibromyalgia and non-fibromyalgia cases.

Of those completing the questionnaire, 36% fulfilled fibromyalgia criteria at enrolment. These cases were primarily women, and received more public economical support than those without fibromyalgia. At 7 years follow up, adjusted results showed that fibromyalgia cases had higher number of hospital courses, and had undergone more invasive procedures; however, differences concerning number of diagnoses between groups were small.

The study also found that the burden to the secondary health care system is significant. Neurologists, gastroenterologists, endocrinologists, pain-specialists, psychiatrists, and abdominal surgeons were all consulted more often by people with fibromyalgia compared to those without. However, there was minimal difference between the groups with regards resulting diagnoses. This finding underlines that prolonged and excessive use of health care services with referral to multiple specialists should be avoided. A timely and coordinated effort across medical specialties, could reduce diagnostic delay, facilitate management, and reduce health care utilisation in people with fibromyalgia.

EULAR evidence-based recommendations for the management of fibromyalgia state that optimal management should focus on prompt diagnosis, patient education and non-pharmacological treatments. In addition, a recent systematic review showed a small to moderate beneficial health effect for mindfulness and acceptance-based interventions for patients with fibromyalgia. Dr Heidi Zangi presented results from such an intervention – followed by low threshold physical exercise counselling – compared to treatment as usual for patients diagnosed with fibromyalgia.

Overall, 56.5% of those randomized to the intervention group responded to the questionnaires; of these, only 15% reported clinically relevant improvement. However, there were small improvements evident in pain, fatigue, and self-efficacy for physical activity.

The improvement seen in patients' tendency to be mindful at 12 months was sustained, although only 58% were in paid work compared to 70% at baseline. Although patients still reported high symptom burden and no improvement in their health status, there was no worsening of symptoms, which might have been the case without any intervention.

Source

Lage-Hansen P, et al. Prevalence of Survey-based Criteria for Fibromyalgia and Impact on Hospital Burden: A 7 years follow up study from an outpatient Clinic. Presented at EULAR 2022; abstract OP0195.

Zangi H, et al. High symptom burden and limited changes in fibromyalgia patients' health status two years after participation in a multicomponent rehabilitation programme. Presented at EULAR 2022; abstract OP0196.

About EULAR

EULAR – the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology – is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). EULAR aims to reduce the burden of RMDs on individuals and society and to improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of RMDs. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with RMDs by the EU institutions through advocacy action.

About the EULAR European Congress of Rheumatology

Since its introduction in 2000, the annual EULAR European Congress of Rheumatology has become the primary platform for exchange of scientific and clinical information in Europe. It is also a renowned forum for interaction between medical doctors, scientists, people with arthritis/rheumatism, health professionals and representatives of the pharmaceutical industry worldwide. The EULAR congress is usually held in June in one of the major cities in Europe.

The scientific programme covers a wide range of topics on clinical innovations, clinical, translational and basic science. Meetings set up by associations of people with arthritis/rheumatism, health professionals and the health care industry complement the programme. The poster sessions, offering lively interaction between presenters and participants, are regarded by many as the heart of the congress.

Over the years, the EULAR Congress has gained a reputation of being a most innovative platform for the practicing physician particularly with respect to the acquisition of information on novel clinical research. The congress attracts more than 18,000 delegates from more than 130 countries.

The aim of the EULAR European Congress of Rheumatology is to provide a forum of the highest standard for scientific, both clinical and basic, educational, and social exchange between

professionals involved in rheumatology, liaising with patient organisations, in order to achieve progress in the clinical care of people with rheumatic diseases.

Contact

EULAR Communications, communications@eular.org, Tel. +41 44 716 30 30

Notes to Editors

[EULAR Recommendations](#)

[EULAR Strategy](#)

[EULAR School of Rheumatology](#)

[EULAR Press Releases](#)

[EULAR COVID-19 Registry](#)