

Mary's Message

"If nothing ever changed, there'd be no butterflies."

Author Unknown

Last year, I announced in this space that we were moving to a new location and time for our meetings. We've had a wonderful year at First Congregational Church in the Memorial area of Houston. The facilities have been very convenient, and the church has been gracious to allow us to use the adjacent kitchen. Meeting on Saturdays was a positive change for many, and allowed those who can't drive at night to join us.

The board of directors has decided that while we will continue to meet on Saturday, we will now meet on the THIRD Saturday of the month. In addition, we will begin meeting every other month. We will meet in January, March, May, July, September, and December. Please see page two of this newsletter for dates.

Meeting less frequently will give us time to work on a September conference. We have a verbal commitment from researcher Dr. Andrew Holman to present his exciting work on spinal cord compression and fibromyalgia. We'll give you more details as they become available, but meanwhile, please keep Saturday, September 18, 2010, open.

I look forward to a wonderful year. If you haven't been to a meeting, or it's been a while, please join us. We'll have great speakers and companionship that you can't find anywhere else.

Take care,
Mary Harper
President

Sleep in Fibromyalgia

By Shyam Subramanian, M.D.

Sleep complaints are extremely common in patients with fibromyalgia. In fact, in addition to diffuse pain, the core symptoms of fibromyalgia include sleep disturbances and chronic daytime fatigue.

Sleep in FM patients is characterized by a peculiar pattern of EEG activity called alpha delta sleep, or alpha intrusion. Alpha waves are typically associated with awake brain activity, and thus this phenomenon may be a marker of nonrestorative sleep that may characterize the disturbed sleep and consequent daytime fatigue that is commonly seen in patients with FM. In fact, researchers have been able to show that if you artificially created multiple arousals similar to that seen in alpha intrusions, you in turn develop a musculoskeletal pain syndrome very similar to FM and which very importantly resolves completely once normal sleep is restored by removing the stimulus for these arousals. This would lead to the intriguing suggestion that a lot of the symptomatology

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Fibromyalgia Association of Houston

the FIBROMYALGIA Connection

The *Fibromyalgia Connection* is published three times a year by The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston, Inc. (FMAH), a 501(c)(3) charity, and its volunteers.

Materials and opinions presented in the newsletter are for information only and do not necessarily reflect the views of FMAH, its officers, directors, or medical advisory board. Fibromyalgia (FM) patients should consult their physicians or other health care professionals for diagnosis and prior to initiating any form of treatment or exercise.

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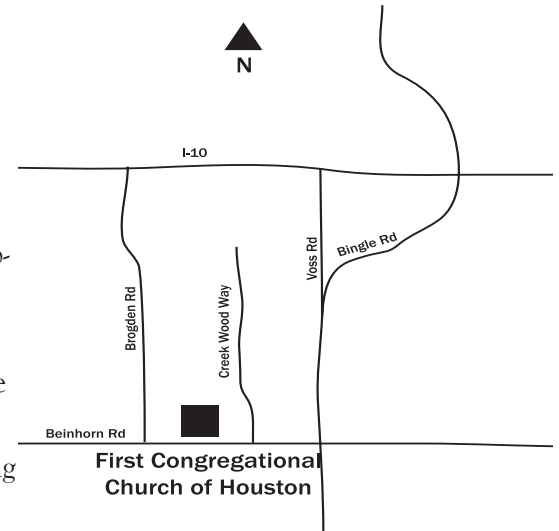
For more information about fibromyalgia, call the FMAH Information Line at 713-664-0180. A volunteer will return your call.

Support Group Meeting Schedule

We meet at the First Congregational Church of Houston and greatly appreciate the space they provide for our meetings; however, FMAH is not affiliated with any church.

All meetings are free and open to the public. Friends and relatives are always welcome.

FMAH reserves the right to substitute speakers if necessary, so for up-to-date information, please call the Information Line at 713-664-0180 or visit us online at www.fmah.org. Parking is free in the church lot.



LOCATION:

The First Congregational Church of Houston
10840 Beinhorn Road (Just south of I-10 at the Voss/Bingle exit)

ROOM:

Assembly Room: Follow the covered walkway.
Signs will be posted.

DAY:

Third Saturday every OTHER month

TIME:

1-3 p.m. Come early to peruse the hand-outs and to meet others coping with fibromyalgia.

January 16

“Sleep in Fibromyalgia”

Shyam Subramanian, M.D.

March 20

“Little Things Mean a Lot: The Feldenkrais Method”

MaryBeth Smith

May 8

Speaker to be announced

Note date change to Second Saturday for this meeting only

January

When was the last time you woke up feeling refreshed? The vast majority of fibromyalgia patients have sleep problems. Many have undiagnosed sleep apnea, but there are several other sleep disorders that can affect how you feel.

We are very pleased to have the Medical Director of Baylor College of Medicine's Sleep Center speak to us on Saturday, January 16. **Dr. Shyam Subramanian** leads the comprehensive sleep center.

Besides offering sleep studies, the clinic offers help for insomnia; those who have tried CPAP machines and failed; and experts, including ear, nose and throat doctors, to address underlying health conditions.

Dr. Subramanian has also written an excellent article for *The Fibromyalgia Connection* on page 1. Please join us for a fascinating and important talk at 1 p.m. in the Assembly Room of First Congregational Church.

March

Moving our bodies sometimes feels overwhelming with pain or the fear of pain. Come experience a new, gentle way of moving. **MaryBeth Smith** director of the Feldenkrais Center of Houston, will lead us in simple, easy movements while sitting and standing. With no struggle (as in traditional exercises), you can feel your muscles relax. For a sample

of Feldenkrais movements, see MaryBeth's Web site at www.houfeldenkrais.com/curious.htm. You can listen or watch right at your computer and follow along. Please join us to meet MaryBeth and learn about this unique method of movement. We'll meet on Saturday, March 20, at 1 p.m. in our usual room at First Congregational Church.

Donations

The following generous donors contributed by check. Unfortunately, there is no way to acknowledge those who made cash contributions, but we do appreciate every donation.

Roberta Apolant
Janet Barrilleaux
Lt. Richard Brown, USMC, RET.,
in memory of his mother, Mrs.
Lucille Reixach Westerhaus and
FMAH volunteer Anne Harris
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Barbara Willis

* Indicates donations of \$50 or more. Thanks to all of you!

Special Thanks

Thanks to the efforts of our wonderful volunteer Bernice Sellers, ExxonMobil has donated \$500 to FMAH. The petrochemical company has established a program to encourage employees and retirees to volunteer in the community. If the employee volunteers for 20 hours during a quarter, the charity receives \$500.

If you are an employee or retiree of ExxonMobil, please think about contributing some time to us. Bernice has worked at health fairs, and is the cheerful person who helps members sign in at meetings. She also helped us get an important mailing out. Thanks, Bernice, for your time and helping us to receive the much-needed funds.

We have new e-mail addresses to better serve you.

E-mail us about the newsletter,
fmc@fmah.org, or
contact us at
info@fmah.org.

Information Line:
713-664-0180

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

in FM may in fact be related to sleep disturbances, and this pathophysiologic association is only recently becoming a focus of increasing interest in FM.

There is a high prevalence of sleep apnea in patients with FM. Sleep apnea is a condition characterized by repetitive and intermittent episodes of partial or complete upper airway narrowing that results in repeated brain arousals, and hence causes sleep disruption. In one study in patients with FM, the average number of pauses in breathing was 22 per hour! In fact, as many as one in four patients with sleep apnea may have symptoms that meet cri-

teria for FM according to one study. Thus we see that there is a significant overlap between patients with FM and those with sleep apnea, and this would suggest that all patients diagnosed with FM are carefully screened for the possibility of having sleep apnea.

Disturbed sleep is common in patients with FM and is technically termed "insomnia." Insomnia in patients with FM is multifactorial, and is related to a variety of factors such as chronic pain, depression, as well as multiple medications that these patients are usually placed on. Also patients with FM may have other sleep conditions such as restless

legs and periodic limb movements which may be contributing as well.

Patients with FM need a very comprehensive and detailed sleep evaluation. Treatment of sleep disturbances in patients with FM may require specialized evaluation, including polysomnography, or sleep study. Appropriate treatment of sleep disorders may lead to a dissipation of symptoms of FM, and may, in turn, significantly improve the quality of life in these patients.

Subramanian is director of the Baylor College of Medicine Sleep Center in Houston, Texas.

Free Ways to Help FMAH Raise Much-Needed Funds

Every time you shop at any of 700+ online stores in the iGive network, a portion of the money you spend benefits FMAH. It's a free service, and you'll never pay more when you reach a store through iGive. In fact, smart shoppers will enjoy iGive's repository of coupons, free shipping deals, and sales. To get started, just create your free iGive account. And when you search the Web, do it through iSearchiGive.com, where each search means a penny (or more!) for our cause. Start iGiving at www.iGive.com and www.iSearchiGive.com.

Health Fairs

One of the ways that we raise awareness of fibromyalgia is by participating in health fairs sponsored by various organizations and businesses. We have a booth and give away information and answer questions. It's a wonderful way to spread the word about FMAH and fibromyalgia. There's always time to visit other booths, see what's new, and get free samples. Thanks to all who devoted considerable time and energy to helping at the booth: Claudia Metting, Gayle Moses, Mary Harper, Brenda Flowers, Melissa Green, Marilyn Bilyeu, Janet Barrilleaux, Bobby Apolant, and Sandra Johnson. We always need more volunteers, so please consider joining us. Call the In-

formation Line at 713-664-0180 or e-mail us at info@fmah.org.

Prescription Discounts

Do you live in Harris County? If you don't have prescription drug insurance coverage, you are eligible to obtain a free discount card which entitles you to an average 20% savings on your medicine. Pick up a card at county libraries or call 713-755-CARD. To find a participating pharmacy, check drug interactions, or get a price estimate, call toll-free 1-877-321-2652.

**Want FMAH merchandise?
Special discount offered only at meetings!**

FIBROMYALGIA UPDATE

Cymbalta approved to treat generalized anxiety disorder

The Food and Drug Administration approved Cymbalta to treat generalized anxiety disorder. It was the second drug approved to treat FM, after Lyrica. The medication is also approved to treat major depressive disorder and diabetic peripheral neuropathic pain.

Research shows qigong relieves FM symptoms

Halifax, Nova Scotia – Two Dalhousie Medical School pain researchers have confirmed that a form of qigong, CFQ qigong, relieves pain and other symptoms of fibromyalgia in an open trial and is worthy of further study in a controlled trial.

Dr. Mary Lynch, professor in the departments of Psychiatry and Anesthesiology and director of the QEII Pain Management Unit, and Jana Sawynok, Ph.D., professor and head of the Department of Pharmacology, conducted an open trial involving 22

people with fibromyalgia.

Of these, 12 completed the nine-week program of daily qigong practice. All 12 experienced some degree of pain relief, improved energy and quality of life, and sustained these improvements at the six-month follow-up.

“These results provide preliminary evidence that qigong may be useful for people who suffer from fibromyalgia,” says Dr. Lynch. “From here, we will apply for funding to conduct a controlled clinical trial.”

Drs. Sawynok and Lynch share a longstanding research interest in pain management. They recently developed a topical cream, containing an antidepressant medication, which is currently in phase three clinical trials for neuropathic pain in the United States. Based on results of previous American and Swedish studies, both felt qigong could be an effective complementary therapy for fibromyalgia, a common and sometimes debilitating condition involving muscular pain throughout the body, poor

sleep, digestive problems and other symptoms.

“CFQ qigong is a gentle, easy-to-learn self-care technique that promotes relaxation and energy flow,” notes Dr. Sawynok, who is involved in a national effort to make medical students aware of complementary and alternative medicine.

“There is always room for self-care in managing chronic pain, which generally requires more than one approach. Medications can be very useful, but they don’t necessarily solve all the problems.”

As an acupuncturist for nearly 20 years, Dr. Lynch knows energy-based healing modalities can be helpful. “The advantage of CFQ is its comprehensive, whole-body effect,” she notes. “It’s not invasive, and it’s a form of exercise people can do even when they are out of shape because they have been in so much pain.”

For more information, visit www.cfqhealingqigong.ca.

**Third
Saturdays**

Starting January 2010

FMAH will start meeting **EVERY OTHER MONTH**. We will continue to meet in the Assembly Room at **First Congregational Church of Houston** at 10840 Beinhorn Road, Houston, TX 77024, located near I-10 and the Bingle/Voss exit in the Memorial area.

The FMAH Store

All information is presented for informational purposes only and reflects the views of the authors.

BOOKS

A Husband, A Wife, & an Illness: Living Life Beyond Chronic Illness, by Dr. William July and Jamey Lacy July. Provides a personal insight into the husband-and-wife dynamic as chronic illness tests their relationship. The Julys share practical tips for both the caregiving spouse and the afflicted spouse.

DVDs

Show Me Where It Hurts – Features two of our 2006 conference speakers, Patrick Wood, MD, and Lynne Matallana, president of the National Fibromyalgia Association. The video discusses cutting-edge research and interviews patients who tell their stories. It provides a great introduction to fibromyalgia and will help friends and families understand what you're going through.

Strength Through Movement – Get moving with FMAH's latest movement video featuring real fibromyalgia patients. This DVD focuses on increasing flexibility and relaxation while reducing stress. Narrated by fitness professional Leslee A. Cross, this video will get you moving!

MEETING DVDs

Acupuncture Basics, John Paul Liang, president of the American College of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine, explaining the theory and use of acupuncture. July 2008.

Changes in Social Security Disability, Robert Hardy, attorney. Hardy is an expert in Social Security Disability law. He explains the current procedure for applying for disability benefits and discusses changes.

In Sickness & In Health: Keeping Love Alive in the Midst of Chronic Illness, Dr. William July and Jamey Lacy July. Professionally recorded live at our February 2009 meeting, this DVD is packed with over an hour of realistic information and inspiration for couples and individuals living with chronic illness.

Is There Anything New about Fibromyalgia? by Robert Walker, M.D. Learn Dr. Walker's views about FM and possible environmental links.

Medical Massage and You, by Mike O'Quin, MMP. Learn how medical massage can help you feel better. See a demonstration of Active Isolated Stretching on president Mary Harper. August 2009.

Physical Medicine: A Psychiatrist's Approach to FM, by Helen Schilling, M.D. What is Physical Medicine? Learn how it can help you manage your symptoms.

Reasons for Foot and Ankle Pain, Justin Jex, DPM. Many of us with FM also have foot and ankle pain. Dr. Jex explains the basics of FM and explains common problems that can add to our pain. He gives practical advice and gives coping tips. March 2008.

MISCELLANEOUS

Lapel Pin. Our logo is now a lapel pin. In full color, it reads "Piecing Together a World with Hope" and shows the puzzle pieces of research, education, supports and vision. It's a great way to spread the word about FMAH and fibromyalgia.

The Fibromyalgia Connection. Newsletter published by The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston. Free to Texas residents; others may view it free of charge on our Web site or send \$10/year for three issues.

FMAH Store Order Form

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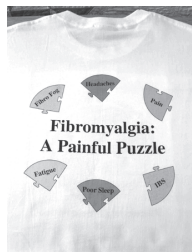
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DVDs:			
<i>Show Me Where It Hurts</i> New Low Price	_____	\$20.00	\$ _____
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<i>In Sickness & In Health: Keeping Love Alive in the Midst of Chronic Illness</i>	_____	\$15.00	\$ _____
<i>Is There Anything New about Fibromyalgia?</i>	_____	\$5.00	\$ _____
<i>Medical Massage and You</i>	_____	\$5.00	\$ _____
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<i>Reasons for Foot and Ankle Pain</i>	_____	\$5.00	\$ _____
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Free to Texas residents. Out-of-state subscriptions: \$10/three issues.

FMAH T-Shirts

Help raise FM awareness! The front of the T-shirt tells who we are, and the back shows the main symptoms of FM. A picture is worth a thousand words, and this T-shirt can help explain FM for you.

(circle size): S, M, L, XL, 2XL



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