

Mary's Message

Happy New Year! I hope that you had a wonderful holiday season and are not too exhausted from trying to do too much. It's always hard to pace yourself, but the excitement and numerous things that must be accomplished in a short period of time can wear out the healthiest person.

It's easy to forget to take care of yourself during the holidays, but now that things are settling back into a routine, it's a good time to think about ways to give back to you. Women, especially, are taught to put themselves last. But if you don't take care of your own needs, you'll soon find yourself running on empty and unable to give to yourself or others.

Make a resolution to do one thing a day just for you. What gives you pleasure, or feeds your soul? Listening to music? Reading? Talking to a friend? Every day, practice taking at least a few minutes to do something relaxing. Your body will thank you.

On a personal note, my husband, Jeff, was recently diagnosed with advanced kidney cancer. Those of you who have been to our meetings have seen him – he's the guy videotaping our speakers, setting up and taking down chairs, and doing whatever it takes to help our meeting run smoothly. It's been a rough roller coaster ride.

Just after his diagnosis, it was really hard for me to fall asleep. Then I started listing everything that I'm grateful for: Jeff, my family, my nose (yes, my nose! It works just fine and brings me fresh oxygen), my cats, heating and air conditioning – you get the idea. It was actually fun to see what popped into my head, and I fell asleep very quickly. You might try this technique and see if it helps you.

Mary Harper
President

Teens with FM benefit from CBT

A recent trial, published in *Arthritis & Rheumatism*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American College of Rheumatology, shows cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) reduces functional disability and depressive symptoms in adolescents with juvenile fibromyalgia. The psychological intervention was found to be safe and effective, and proved to be superior to disease management education.

Medical evidence reports that juvenile fibromyalgia syndrome affects 2 percent to 7 percent of school-age children.

For the current trial, led by Dr. Susmita Kashikar-Zuck from the Division of Behavioral Medicine and Clinical Psychology at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in Ohio, investigators recruited 114 adolescents between the ages of 11 and 18 years who were diagnosed with juvenile fibromyalgia.

Analyses showed that both patient groups displayed significant reduction in functional disability, pain, and depressive symp-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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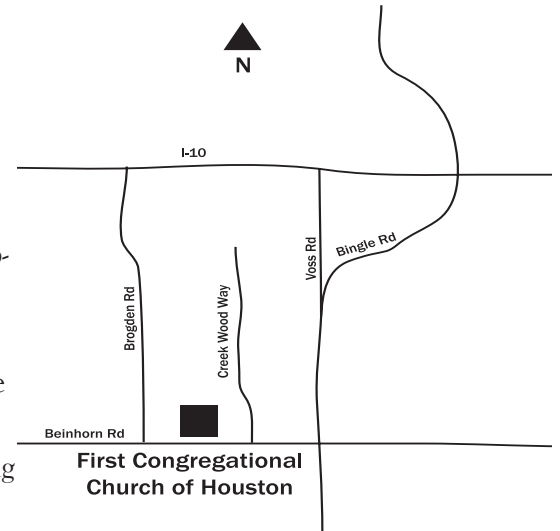
For more information about fibromyalgia, call the FMAH Information Line at 713-664-0180. A volunteer will return your call.

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. unless otherwise posted. Come early to peruse the free handouts and to meet others coping with fibromyalgia.

January 21, 2012

Massage and Fibromyalgia
Massage Envy

March 17, 2012

Environmental Medicine and Fibromyalgia
Erica Campbell, N.D.

New FMAH T-Shirts

Updated design on a flattering gray shirt

\$12 (including shipping)

Get Yours Now!

Sizes: Small to Extra Large

January: Massage and Fibromyalgia

Have you ever had a massage? If not, come to our meeting on January 21 for a sample neck massage by a massage therapist. Representatives from Massage Envy will speak to our group about how massage can help fibromyalgia. Massage therapy provides many benefits, including relaxation and pain relief.

March: Environmental Medicine and Fibromyalgia

Erica Campbell, N.D., a naturopathic doctor, discusses environmental medicine and fibromyalgia. Dr. Campbell's area of expertise is naturopathic medicine, a specialty that focuses on preventative medicine, holistic therapies, disease prevention, and wellness. Join us for this enlightening discussion on March 17.

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.

Christie Almon

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Thanks to all of you!

* Indicates donations of \$50 or more.

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

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

toms at the end of the trial. Pediatric participants in the cognitive-behavioral therapy group reported a significantly greater reduction in functional disability compared to those receiving FM education.

The therapy group had a 37 percent improvement in disability compared to 12 percent in the education cohort. Both groups had scores in the nondepressed range by the end of the study, but pain reduction was not clinically significant – a decrease in pain of less than 30 percent for either group.

Learn more about ways to help FMAH by visiting us online at www.fmah.org.



Missed out on FMAH's holiday party and white elephant gift exchange? Here is a snapshot from that fun-filled afternoon. FMAH President Mary Harper explains the rules of the gift exchange. FMAH was joined by the Houston CFIDS Association at this year's party, which was held on December 10, 2011.

Can Exercise Help Your Memory?

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Areas of the brain responsible for pain processing and cognitive performance changed in fibromyalgia patients who exercised following a break from taking medication, say researchers from Georgetown University Medical Center. They say the changes indicate brain functioning are more streamlined after an exercise intervention because fewer of the brain's resources are devoted to processing bothersome fibromyalgia perceptions such as pain.

The study, presented at the Society of Neuroscience's annual meeting, Neuroscience 2011, used functional MRI (fMRI) scans to assess changes in the brain. Researchers observed a decrease in brain activity in areas responsible for memory and pain control after fibromyalgia patients took part in an exercise regimen.

"The decreased brain activity we see in the area of cognition suggests that the brain is working more efficiently," explains Brian Walitt, M.D. M.P.H., director of the Fibromyalgia Evaluation and Research Center at Georgetown



University Medical Center and senior study author. "We also see less brain activity in areas responsible for pain processing that might be aiding that efficiency." Walitt cautions that more research needs to be conducted before suggesting a change in clinical care for fibromyalgia.

To that end, the research team used fMRI to "provide a definitive measure of cognitive functioning, so that we can more scientifically measure the effect of

exercise," says Manish Khatiwada, M.S., who presented the results. "This is a novel approach to the study of fibromyalgia."

For this study, the researchers enrolled 18 women with fibromyalgia and gave them a baseline fMRI to assess working memory and questionnaires about their well-being and pain while they were on medication. They then were told not to use their medications for a "washout" period, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

**Third
Saturdays**

FMAH meets **EVERY OTHER MONTH** 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.

had a second fMRI and memory testing. After six weeks, they had another assessment. The final scan was taken after the volunteers engaged in a six-week period of exercise, which involved three 30-minute sessions of aerobic exercise each week with a trainer.

Memory and pain typically worsen in patients after stopping their medication, which was the experience of patients in this study. After six weeks of exercise, however, patients reported an improvement in overall well-being. However, their performance in the memory task did not change significantly when compared to their baseline study measurements. Despite a change in memory test performance, brain activity in the memory task and pain processing areas of the brain decreased.

“What we see is less interference by pain activity, which could be contributing to the decrease in activity in the memory section. Basically, the brain is using less energy for the same task,” Walitt says.

The authors report no personal financial interests related to the study. This research is supported by an American College of Rheumatology Investigator Award and a MedStar Health Women’s Auxiliary Intramural Grant.

The Fibromyalgia Survivor’s Creed

By *Monica Engle Peng*

Okay, friends, let’s all say it together. I will:

Find joy in each day. There is joy in each day – it is up to each of us to overcome our obstacles and find it. When I find it, I will claim it as my own. I will feed my soul.

Investigate medical developments so that I can be an active partner in my treatment. I will not place my well-being in someone else’s hands out of ignorance. I will accept responsibility for myself.

Be true to myself above all things. I can give to others only when I am well. I will take proper care of myself.

Respect the needs of my family, friends, and co-workers. This is not their problem, and I cannot force their acceptance or understanding. I will accept only that support which is offered freely. But that doesn’t mean I have to accept “garbage” from insensitive, uncaring people. I will stop trying to live up to the unrealistic expectations of other people.

Offer support and encouragement to others. Nobody succeeds on his or her own. I will be there for others when they need me.

Make every day count. My body may refuse to cooperate, but the strength of my mind and spirit cannot be diminished or defeated. When I cannot do

what I would ordinarily choose to do, I will choose to do something else.

Yield to the symptoms of this disease as necessary without surrendering my life or myself. This disease does not define me. My life is my own, and nothing will diminish my value as a person. I will guard the essence of myself.

Afford myself certain allowances. I will not pressure myself into performing nonessential functions when circumstances make them impossible. If they can’t wait, I’ll ask for help. I will be my own best friend.

L laugh heartily and often. A light heart is easier to carry. I will carry only the burdens necessary and dispose of the rest.

Give thanks to God for the many blessings He has bestowed on me. And I will look for – and be grateful for – the hidden blessings of this disease. I will trust in God.

Invest my energy only in positive thoughts, positive actions, and positive people. Negativity depletes my reserves. I will use my energy in positive ways.

Acept that which I cannot change – but only that which I cannot change. I will not use this disease as an excuse for failure or for not making a real effort. I will not give up. I will not be a victim. I will survive.

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

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!

CONFERENCE DVDs

New Hope for Fibromyalgia: Research Updates. A two-DVD set of the Symposium held September 25, 2010. Researchers Andrew Holman, M.D., and Patrick Wood, M.D., discussed their theories and implications for treatment. This is the perfect way to learn the latest from the comfort of your couch.

MEETING DVDs

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.

Fibromyalgia and Depression, Vera Gonzales, Ph.D. Dr. Gonzales discusses the role of depression in chronic pain.

Fibromyalgia and Pain, Phillip Phan, M.D., director of neuromodulation and pain management, Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Phan explains available therapies and theories of why FM patients suffer pain.

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.

Little Things Mean a Lot: The Feldenkrais Method, MaryBeth Smith, director, Feldenkrais Center of Houston. Experience a new, gentle way of moving and relaxing your muscles.

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.

Pain, FM, and TMJ Dysfunction, Ronald Auvenshine, D.D.S., Ph.D. Learn more about jaw pain caused by temporomandibular joint disorder, how it is treated, and its connection to fibromyalgia.

Sleep in Fibromyalgia, Shyam Subramanian, M.D., former medical director, Baylor College of Medicine Sleep Center. Learn how sleep disorders affect FM, and treatments to improve your sleep.

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, support, and vision. It’s a great way to spread the word about FMAH and fibromyalgia.

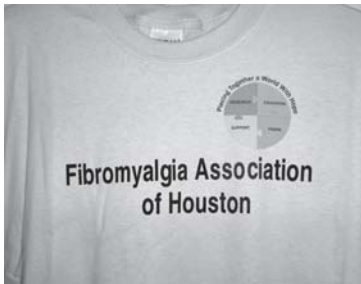
The Fibromyalgia Connection. Newsletter published by The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston. Free to Texas residents; others may view it free of charge on our Web site or send \$10/year for three issues.

FMAH Store Order Form

	Quantity	Price	Total
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DVDs:			
<i>Strength Through Movement</i>	_____	\$11.00	\$ _____
CONFERENCE DVDs:			
<i>New Hope for Fibromyalgia: Research Updates</i>	_____	\$12.00	\$ _____
MEETING DVDs:			
<i>Changes in Social Security Disability</i>	_____	\$6.00	\$ _____
<i>Fibromyalgia and Depression</i>	_____	\$6.00	\$ _____
<i>Fibromyalgia and Pain</i>	_____	\$6.00	\$ _____
<i>In Sickness & In Health: Keeping Love Alive in the Midst of Chronic Illness</i>	_____	\$16.00	\$ _____
<i>Is There Anything New about Fibromyalgia?</i>	_____	\$6.00	\$ _____
<i>Little Things Mean a Lot: The Feldenkrais Method</i>	_____	\$6.00	\$ _____
<i>Medical Massage and You</i>	_____	\$6.00	\$ _____
<i>Pain, FM, and TMJ Dysfunction</i>	_____	\$6.00	\$ _____
<i>Sleep in Fibromyalgia</i>	_____	\$6.00	\$ _____
MISCELLANEOUS:			
Lapel Pin	_____	\$3.00	\$ _____
The Fibromyalgia Connection	_____	\$10.00	\$ _____
Free to Texas residents. Out-of-state subscriptions: \$10/three issues.			

FMAH T-Shirts:

Help raise FM awareness! The newly redesigned gray T-shirt features the FMAH name and logo.
(circle size): S, M, L, XL



_____	\$12.00	\$ _____
	Donation:	\$ _____
	Total:	\$ _____

PRICES INCLUDE TAX AND SHIPPING.

Method of Payment (please check one): MasterCard () Visa () Check or Money Order (). Make payable to: FMAH, P.O. Box 541742, Houston, TX 77254-1742. For questions, email info@fmah.org or call the Information Line at 713-664-0180.

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