To the Point News

In our quarterly newsletter, you will find up-to-date information about fibromyalgia and performing arts physical therapy. At Bethesda Physiocare, we treat adults and children with acute and chronic pain problems, but also athletes and musicians with sports or performance-related injuries. Mr. Marwan Khayat, PT and Jan Dommerholt, PT, MPS have specialized in the physical therapy management of patients with craniofacial pain or temporomandibular (jaw) pain.

We are excited to announce the opening of our satellite office, Shady Grove Physiocare, located at 14955 Shady Grove Road #260, Rockville, MD 20850. Contact us at 301.656.5613 (Bethesda) or 301.251.1266 (Shady Grove) to make an appointment.

To provide the best, evidence-informed physical therapy services, physical therapists at Bethesda Physiocare attend many courses and conferences.

FIBROMYALGIA:
ROAD TO RECOVERY

In August 2007, the physical therapy team attended the conference of the International Myopain Society (IMS), a medical society devoted to the study of fibromyalgia and myofascial pain. Since the publication of the classification criteria for fibromyalgia in 1990, much research has been conducted to explore the possible underlying causes of the disease and to find effective therapies. More than 1,200 peer-reviewed articles have been published in the scientific literature.

Although the criteria were designed as classification criteria for research purposes only, many physicians use the criteria to diagnose patients with fibromyalgia. Patients with fibromyalgia usually have widespread pain and an increased sensitivity of the nervous system. They tend to be more fatigued than normal, and have abnormal sleep patterns with restless sleep and a lack of so-called deep sleep. The diagnosis should be made after taking an extensive medical history. The diagnosis of fibromyalgia is made when 11 or more points out of a total of 18 are painful to 4 kilograms of force. Women are diagnosed more frequently than men.

There is some controversy whether fibromyalgia is a "diagnosis of inclusion" or a "diagnosis of exclusion". Proponents of the inclusion diagnosis feel that the diagnosis of fibromyalgia should be made irrespective of other medical diagnoses a patient may have. For example, a patient with a low functioning thyroid may present with complaints of fatigue, poor sleep,

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and widespread pain. Doctors who believe that fibromyalgia is a diagnosis of exclusion would most likely diagnose the patient with hypo-thyroid disorder, whereas doctors who believe that fibromyalgia is a diagnosis of inclusion would diagnose the same patient with fibromyalgia and hypo-thyroid disease. There are many medical diagnoses that feature widespread pain and there is a risk that other possible causes of widespread pain are not adequately addressed when a diagnosis of fibromyalgia is given without looking into other options.

During the IMS conference, specialists in fibromyalgia agreed that fibromyalgia is a syndrome characterized by increased sensitivity of the nervous system, which is often referred to as central sensitization.

Central Sensitization

One of the most common symptoms of fibromyalgia is known as “allodynia”, which is a painful response to a non-painful stimulus. Light touch or even the feeling of clothing on the skin may be painful to patients with alldynia. The Food and Drug Administration has recognized that patients with fibromyalgia have an altered pain experience and has approved the first medication (pregabalin) with an indication for fibromyalgia.

From a physical therapy perspective, it is important to identify potential pain generators that contribute to or maintain the increased sensitivity. Physical therapists at Bethesda Physiocare and Shady Grove Physiocare take a very detailed history and try to assist medical doctors with the differential diagnosis and with identifying other pain generators. Myofascial trigger points are one possible contributing factor. Careful examination of muscles that could trigger increased pain in a particular body region is essential. Inactivating myofascial trigger points in patients diagnosed with fibromyalgia often gives gradual relief of pain.

Mostly because of pain and fatigue, many patients with fibromyalgia have decreased their activity levels. Along with decreasing pain, it is very important to increase activities, start a walking program, or some other form of aerobic exercise.

"Pain makes man think. Thought makes man wise. Wisdom makes life endurable."
John Patrick
Bethesda Physiocare has become one of the premier clinics in the greater Washington DC metropolitan region for musicians unable to play their instruments, because of pain with playing. Approximately 20% of the patients of physical therapist Jan Dommerholt are musicians ranging from young children to professional musicians, including members of the National Symphony, the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras, and the Baltimore Symphony. Numerous music students of the University of Maryland, Catholic University, American University, and George Mason University, among many others, have consulted with Mr. Dommerholt and have returned to playing without pain. Ariadna Buonviri, professional violinist, summarized her treatment at Bethesda Physiocare as “thanks to you, I can play again!”

When possible, musicians are requested to bring their instruments to Bethesda Physiocare. There is an upright piano in the clinic, that is used to examine keyboard players. Often, performance-related problems do not show up until the musician has played the instrument for a while. Young musicians and adult students may develop painful hands, arms, shoulders, necks, and backs after changing music teachers, after changing instruments (for example, after changing from playing the violin to the viola), or after attending an intensive music camp, or when practicing for a recital.

Sometimes, Jan Dommerholt recommends making small adjustments to the instrument. Recently, a violinist with hypermobile finger joints returned to playing after receiving a custom-made finger splint.

All musicians are evaluated thoroughly and receive a treatment plan based on their individual needs. In the assessment, we consider not only the biomechanical demands of playing a musical instrument and the musculoskeletal system, but also evaluate the musical repertoire. Most musicians do not exercise regularly and may benefit from posture corrections, a gentle exercise program, and advise regarding practice habits. Mr. Dommerholt works closely with music teachers, conductors, and other health care providers.

Contact Bethesda Physiocare today for an appointment!

"Ah, music. A magic beyond all we do here!"
Dumbledore (J.K. Rowling)

"Not to have felt pain is not to have been human."
Jewish Proverb

Ann Marie Hanson, PT

Ann Marie Hanson, PT is a licensed physical therapist with over 25 years of experience in acute and subacute care, home health care, hospital-based, and outpatient physical therapy. She has completed all the courses of the Myopain Seminars course program.

Ms. Hanson is a graduate of Howard University’s Physical Therapy program. Her areas of interest are maintaining balance and coordination, remediation of weakness, managing pain in the musculoskeletal system (low back, neck, joint and muscle), and total joint rehabilitation. Ann Marie’s practice philosophy is one of identifying goals with the patient, educating the patient and family, and coaching and mentoring both patient and family into attaining and maintaining the goals. She is NDT certified, a treatment used for stroke and neuromuscular rehabilitation.

Ms. Hanson is a member of the American Physical Therapy Association and the International Myopain Society. Born in Switzerland, Ms. Hanson has lived and in various countries around the world. She is fluent in Spanish and English. She is licensed in Maryland and the District of Columbia. Also, she has practiced in the states of Texas and South Carolina.
Directions to Bethesda Physiocare

From the North (Maryland and West (Virginia): Take I-495 to Exit 36, Rte 187 (Old Georgetown Rd) south. Turn right to Del Ray Avenue and an immediate left to park in the garage underneath the building.

From the South (DC): Drive north on Wisconsin Avenue. Take a left at Rte 187 (Old Georgetown Rd). Bethesda Physiocare is on the left after Cordell Avenue. Make a left at Del Rey Avenue and an immediate left to park in the garage underneath the building.

By Metro: Take the Red Line to the Bethesda station. Walk north on Old Georgetown Road for about three blocks, or take the “Bethesda 8 Shuttle” (free) from the Metro station, which can drop you off across the street from the building at 7830 Old Georgetown Road.

Directions to Shady Grove Physiocare

Take I-270 to Exit 8, Shady Grove Road, west. Follow Shady Grove Road until you reach Falls Grove Boulevard. Make a U-turn at Falls Grove Boulevard. Shady Grove Physiocare is on the right in the Falls Grove Village Office Center. Parking is free either in front or in the back of the building.