

Dr. Pawel Zalewski – Fibromyalgia in Poland

The incidence of fibromyalgia is not precisely known, but it is estimated that it affects about 2-10% of general population. In Poland, 1 to 2.5 million people may suffer from fibromyalgia. It usually occurs between 30-50 years of age, but it can occur at any age. Women are at 3-4 times higher risk of developing fibromyalgia than men. It is also believed that the disease may be predisposed by genetic factors. Approximately 20% of patients, fibromyalgia becomes a cause of permanent disability. Fibromyalgia has only recently been recognized as a distinct disease, and doctors are still divided as to the acceptance of its occurrence. Due to variety of symptoms it is often identified with other conditions that have congenital or similar symptoms and progress, but standard tests and their treatment is not effective. Fibromyalgia is a disease most often diagnosed by rheumatologists based on detailed information on wide spread pain index (WPI) and symptoms severity scale (SS) according to current diagnostic criteria proposed by the American College of Rheumatology (ACR, 2010). The absence of objective laboratory methods confirming diagnosis of fibromyalgia and its nonspecific symptoms result that the average time required for the diagnosis is increased. It is estimated that average period of 5 years lasts between patients first reporting symptoms to formal diagnosis of fibromyalgia. Since the pathogenesis of the disease is not fully understood, an effective treatment cannot be applied. Despite many attempts to variety of therapies undertaken in Poland and across the world their results are less than satisfactory. Recent literature data indicate that the treatment should be based on individual and multidisciplinary approach to the patient what is described by the acronym MESS: medication (M), exercise (E) sleep training (S), stress management (S). Therefore, the therapy of patients with fibromyalgia should be largely directed to alleviate the symptoms and improve quality of live.