

Fibromyalgia in adults: diagnostic process in the primary care setting

1

Assess pain and its impact: bio-psycho-social approach

- Characteristics: conditions and circumstances of occurrence, topography, intensity, duration, variability, fluctuation over time, factors triggering, exacerbating, maintaining, relieving pain.
- Mechanisms: nociceptive, neuropathic, nociplastic pain.
- Impact on daily life, work, interpersonal relationships, mood.

2

Consider and clinically screen for fibromyalgia

Three guiding factors

- Pain $\geq$ 3 months, diffuse, often variable and fluctuating over time and in intensity and location, combined with other symptoms.
- Normal physical examination.
- Absence of diseases or medication use that could explain the pain.

A screening aid: self-administered FIRST¹

- If FIRST positive: strong suspicion, but clinical judgement remains the primary factor.
- If FIRST negative or doubtful: **continue the diagnostic process.**

3

Investigate for other diseases causing chronic pain AND concomitant diseases*

- Minimal laboratory tests: CPK, CRP, CBC, TSH², transaminases.
 - Additional investigations based on physical examination and clinical judgement.
- **Repeat the physical examination before attributing any new symptom to fibromyalgia.**

* In particular, inflammatory or systemic rheumatological, neuromuscular, endocrine conditions, etc.

4

Clinically confirm the diagnosis of fibromyalgia and assess its impact

- American College of Rheumatology criteria [revised in 2016].
 - Quality of life: self-administered fibromyalgia impact questionnaire (FIQ³).
 - Anxiety and depressive disorders.
- **If necessary, refer to another specialist for diagnostic assistance.**

5

Recognise the suffering and deliver the diagnosis

- Legitimise complaints.
- Inform, explain the condition, its mechanisms, the treatment options and provide a written document.
- Provide information about patient associations: experience-sharing, support.

Co-construct the care plan with the patient

- Formulate realistic and achievable goals to improve functional condition and learn to live with the condition, alleviate pain and other symptoms and improve quality of life.
- Define shared assessment criteria for monitoring the condition.

1. FIRST: Fibromyalgia Rapid Screening Tool, self-administered questionnaire.
 2. CPK: creatine phosphokinase; CRP: C-reactive protein; CBC: complete blood count;
 TSH: thyroid-stimulating hormone.
 3. FIQ: Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire.

