

EFFICACY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY IN THE TREATMENT OF CHRONIC PAIN IN WOMEN WITH FIBROMYALGIA

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ABSTRACT: Introduction: Fibromyalgia is a chronic rheumatic pathology, which presents generalized pain throughout the body, predominantly in women aged 40 - 50 years, representing 4.2% of this public, in Brazil the statistic is 5%. **Objective:** to carry out a approach regarding pathophysiology, symptoms and diagnosis, in addition to analyzing how the performance physiotherapy can contribute to the treatment and relief of chronic pain in women carriers of the disease. **Methodology:** this is a work based on a literature review in a descriptive, qualitative manner, of which databases were used electronics such as LILACS, SCIELO, Virtual Health Library and periodicals. where 18 publications were selected and included in its preparation. **Result:** The studies selected evidence that fibromyalgia negatively impacts women's lives with fibromyalgia, but physiotherapy is an effective resource from diagnosis to treatment.

Conclusion: The study unanimously shows how fibromyalgia and chronic pain directly and indirectly impact women's quality of life, highlighting how much physiotherapy is effective for women with chronic pain resulting from fibromyalgia, as there are a wide range of techniques and resources that the professional can use to provide prevention, treatment and rehabilitation for these women. And reinforces the importance of new studies on the subject.

Keywords: Pain. Fibromyalgia. Physiotherapy. Woman.

ABSTRACT: Introduction: Fibromyalgia is a chronic rheumatic disease that presents widespread pain throughout the body, with a predominance in women aged 40-50 years, representing 4.2% of this population. In Brazil, the statistic is 5%. **Objective:** to carry out an approach regarding pathophysiology, symptoms and diagnosis, in addition to analyzing how the role of physiotherapy can contribute to the treatment and relief of chronic pain in women with the disease. **Methodology:** this is a work based on a descriptive, qualitative literature



review, from which electronic databases such as LILACS, SCIELO, Virtual Health Library and periodicals were used, where 18 publications were selected and included in its elaboration. **Result:** The selected studies show that fibromyalgia negatively impacts the lives of women with fibromyalgia, but physiotherapy is an effective resource in the diagnosis and treatment. **Conclusion:** The study unanimously shows how fibromyalgia and chronic pain directly and indirectly impact women's quality of life, highlighting how effective physiotherapy is for women with chronic pain resulting from fibromyalgia, as there are a wide range of techniques and resources that professionals can use to provide prevention, treatment and rehabilitation for these women. And it reinforces the importance of new studies on the subject.

Keywords: Pain. Fibromyalgia. Physiotherapy. Woman.

1. INTRODUCTION

Fibromyalgia is a chronic rheumatic pathology, which presents widespread pain, or even generalized throughout the body, with the carrier being able to feel changes in the body, mental part, evolving in many cases into depression or anxiety, still being a disease that needs a lot of studies because its origin is not clearly known, it causes enlightened, but which mostly affects women aged 40 - 50, representing 4.2% of this public, in Brazil the statistic is 5% (Alves et al., 2021).

In addition to being predominant in women, these women also largely present economic, social, educational and political fragility. But according to statistics worldwide, occurrences of the pathology vary between 0.2% and 8%, with these data being in Brazil may correspond to 2.5%, the difficulty in standardized protocols for diagnosis, symptoms with great variation, discrepancies between each patient, directly impact the treatments (Costa; Ferreira; 2024).

Physiotherapy within the reality experienced by many women with fibromyalgia, can help with quality of life, through techniques applied to the physical part, but also through work in partnership with other health professionals, such as: psychologist, nutritionist, doctor, personal trainer, among others. Thus, physiotherapy through



therapeutic interventions and their techniques help in the prevention and treatment of chronic pain in women with fibromyalgia, when educating these women, physical therapists with the importance of treatment, encourages changes in biopsychosocial habits that will result in improving their quality of life, so it is important that the professional is qualified with theory and practice to serve this specific public, because through knowledge, will be able to adequately conduct the clinical case individually for each patient (Peres, 2021; Castro et al., 2024).

The justification of the work stands out for its scientific relevance in showing how physiotherapists can present non-invasive therapeutic techniques and resources medication in the prevention and treatment of chronic pain in women with fibromyalgia. Fibromyalgia, despite having many diagnosed cases, still has no cure or causes well defined, which can delay treatment, so professional qualification is fundamental in identifying and starting to take action in relation to each woman individualized manner. The work also contributes to the academic community, health and social professionals by expanding everyone's knowledge by identifying the needs of people affected by the disease.

In view of the above, the objective of the work is to carry out an approach referring to the pathophysiology of fibromyalgia, so that throughout its description it is possible to understand their symptoms, how they arrive at the diagnosis, as well as analyzing how the role of physiotherapy can contribute to the treatment and relief of chronic pain in women with the disease.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Fibromyalgia and physiotherapy

The term fibromyalgia first appeared in a review by Hench in 1976, however, it was only in 1981 that it was recognized as a syndrome. Generally, it is marked by strong pain spread across various parts of the body, that is, an intense sensitivity, which can be felt by gentle contact. It is common for the pain to arise after shocks or stressful situations. This is a chronic disease, with numerous factors

related, multifactorial and non-evolutionary, because in physical, laboratory and health evaluations images, it is not common to find findings of progression or onset of the disease, but the manifestations of pain, continues to be its main characteristic mentioned by patients (Garcia et. al., 2023).

Fibromyalgia is also described as a prolonged, painful condition, not inflammatory, of uncertain origin, but which develops in the musculoskeletal system, in addition of being able to affect other systems and organs of the body. The lack of information about the pathophysiology allows major depression and chronic fatigue syndrome to be confused with fibromyalgia, making diagnosis difficult, so women with Fibromyalgia sufferers face a combination of both external and internal factors throughout their daily routine. It is important to note that criticism due to fatigue and indisposition is common, In this way, physiotherapy can contribute in several ways to the quality of life of these patients, from an application with aromatherapy to more advanced techniques in treatment and prevention of anxiety, depression and assistance with muscle tension (Novato et al.,2024; Junior et al., 2023).

Working with fibromyalgia is considered a challenge, as it is of utmost importance know the cause of the pathologies to start a treatment plan for it, but how fibromyalgia has an unknown etiology, which makes it complicated. But physiotherapists come developing means of individual assessment based on the Visual Analogue Scale, which assess the patient's pain level, taking into account the particularities of each individual, but in general the plans seek light exercise routines, and for a longer period of time, so as not to overload the patient's body, showing an improvement after 8 weeks of training, where the body can benefit in different ways such as improving performance, oxygenation, resistance, among others (Muniz; Ferreira, 2022).

Physiotherapy “is an area of health that is dedicated to the evaluation, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of functional kinetic disorders (body movement and function)”. Where some techniques such as acupuncture, manual therapy, pilates, electrotherapies and hydrokinesiotherapy is used by physiotherapists as a non-invasive therapeutic resource pharmacological, assisting in the entire process of individual monitoring of women with fibromyalgia, which, even without the known etiology for better action through creation of protocols with more accurate directions, physiotherapists have presented

convincing and relevant results, promoting physical examination, prevention, treatment, recovery for women with fibromyalgia (Alves et al., 2021).

3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The methodology used is a work based on a literature review of descriptive manner, of a qualitative order, of which databases were used electronics such as LILACS, SCIELO, Virtual Health Library and periodicals. For the research work, an exploratory reading of 38 publications was carried out, where 18 of these were selected and included in its preparation. The following keywords were used: Physiotherapy. Pain. Fibromyalgia. Women. The research data collection took place in period from August 2024 to May 2025.

As inclusion criteria, full-text, free publications were selected, in Portuguese and English, with a focus on physiotherapeutic interventions. The following were excluded: publications that did not include the keywords, in addition to those published in other languages, which did not meet the theme addressed, summaries and which focused on a pharmacological approach.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicate that fibromyalgia syndrome directly or indirectly affects the physical, social and emotional aspects of affected women, resulting in attention special attention to the quality of life of these patients, in addition to the effectiveness of physiotherapy in chronic pain of women with fibromyalgia. Table 1 summarizes the articles chosen for the review systematic, containing the name of the author, the year of publication, type of study, the objective main and important results.

Table 1: Studies that comprise the results and discussion.

AUTHOR (YEAR)	TYPE OF STUDY	OBJECTIVE MAIN	RESULTS IMPORTANT
Almanza et al.	Narrative Review and Discussion	Hypotheses	Recovery of

(2023).	analytical	etiological pathophysiological for development of fibromyalgia.	disturbances systemic offers a wide range of therapeutic options, with the ability to assist professionals in the definition of objectives and techniques assessment.
Arantes et al. (2022).	Study exploratory bibliographic	Describe the relationship between the practice of physical activity and improve symptomatology fibromyalgia	States that the practice constant exercise physical intensity low results in benefits long-term health, as to the physical aspects and mental of patients with fibromyalgia.
Costa et al. (2021).	Cross-sectional study, Descriptive, exploratory, qualitative quantitative	Describe everyday experiences of women with fibromyalgia and its reflection on quality of life	The experiences participants included the ignorance syndrome, the treatment in polypharmacy, isolation, difficulties carrying out activities routine. Indicating both in the quantitative scope how much quantitative commitment quality of life.
Coast; Blacksmith. (2024).	Qualitative study, descriptive exploratory	To analyze social representations fibromyalgia based on their	Pain, as a phenomenon subjective, makes it difficult for you legitimacy, the diagnosis therapy,

		<p>symptoms and your</p> <p>influences node</p> <p>diagnosis and in</p> <p>therapy.</p>	<p>enhancing the</p> <p>suffering. Information</p> <p>insufficient generate</p> <p>judgments, stereotypes and</p> <p>prejudices.</p>
<p>Fields</p> <p>(2021).</p>	<p>Study</p> <p>observational,</p> <p>transversal</p>	<p>Assess the impact of</p> <p>Fibromyalgia in the</p> <p>quality of life</p> <p>health related</p> <p>(HRQoL) of patients</p> <p>treaties in services</p> <p>specialized without</p> <p>Portugal, in attention</p> <p>(secondary or</p> <p>tertiary) and identify</p> <p>you aspects</p> <p>sociodemographic,</p> <p>clinical and psychological</p> <p>that are related</p> <p>to HRQoL.</p>	<p>Highlights that fibromyalgia</p> <p>generates a negative effect on HRQoL,</p> <p>referent to the</p> <p>physical, emotional aspects</p> <p>and social, with the dimension</p> <p>physics being the most</p> <p>impacted.</p>
<p>Cohen et al.</p> <p>(2021).</p>	<p>Cross-sectional study</p>	<p>Addressing pain in</p> <p>context from the</p> <p>fibromyalgia.</p>	<p>Chronic pain can be</p> <p>similar to a</p> <p>pathology, and therefore its</p> <p>reduction within the framework</p> <p>of fibromyalgia acts</p> <p>directly in improving the</p> <p>quality of life of</p> <p>patients.</p>
<p>Ascenso et al.</p> <p>(2021).</p>	<p>Study revision</p> <p>bibliographical</p>	<p>address fibromyalgia</p> <p>and its consequences</p> <p>in everyday life of</p>	<p>Fibromyalgia is a</p> <p>major illness</p> <p>importance, as it can</p>

		patient	affect the patient in several ways ways, presenting persistent symptoms.
Ignatius et al. (2024).	Study revision bibliographical	Understand how the scientific literature addresses the interface of the fibromyalgia in women and psychology, between the years 2019 and 2023.	Fibromyalgia has a negative impact on various areas of life female, causing losses and transformations.
Gois et al., (2025).	Cross-sectional study, qualitative.	Evaluate experiences on relationship therapist/patient and with the team multidisciplinary.	Physiotherapists face barriers communicative with the team multidisciplinary using resources communicative to facilitate the professional accessibility.
Oliveira, Cardoso; (2024).	Study revision bibliographical	To understand the effectiveness of physiotherapy in the treatment of fibromyalgia, evaluating the techniques used for pain relief and quality improvement of patients' lives.	The role of physiotherapy is fundamental in the treatment from the fibromyalgia, providing relief from pain and improvement functional to patients.

The study by Almanza et al., (2023), points out that debate regarding the hypotheses of etiology and pathophysiology related to fibromyalgia, where in their analytical study Iran and Brazil has the highest statistics of women with chronic pain resulting from fibromyalgia, because for every 5 women only 1 man has the disease. Understanding the etiology is necessary to better approach it, reducing diagnoses

mistaken and late treatments, since in the current scenario, there are causes considered multifactorial. But the highlight of this study is to associate the Autonomic Nervous System with etiology and pathophysiology, in which he reports that “fibromyalgia has its decline related to gray matter that surrounds the brain, known as the cerebral cortex, the most external to it involving stress factors and the pain process, which may justify the various symptoms according to the reports of each patient, as well as the difficulty of diagnose. Thus, the study further reinforces the importance of reversing the balance in the ANS, as this allows physiotherapists to promote numerous forms of therapeutic strategies effective that can help professionals outline their treatment goals and improve assessment techniques.

In general, women with fibromyalgia who do some type of exercise physical, such as swimming, dancing and others mentioned in a general way, describes that there is a significant improvement in quality of life, but many use the medicine as first option, due to lack of stimuli or knowledge about the exercises, the study reinforced still the importance of more research that better describes which exercises and the time duration for better accuracy of findings. Since regular physical activity impacts in reducing clinical manifestations (Arantes et al., 2022).

“Quality of life is a subjective term that refers to the knowledge of one’s own exist”, in this context a combination of quantitative approach was developed through *Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire* with 19 questions and qualitative by interviews, where 8 women between the ages of 43 and 74 participated, where the publication showed that the majority have little knowledge of the pathology, limiting themselves to the signs and symptoms, many women only seek help after experiencing excessive pain and muscle tension morning, making the diagnosis late. They use at least one opioid analgesic or not with exercises assisted by a physiotherapist, however the use of medication did not present improvement in the quality of life of patients, while physical exercises present improvements in various aspects of patients' lives such as social, mental and physical, but report that carrying out the activities is also not simple, as it requires a lot of everyone organism, hence the importance of individualized monitoring by a professional trained physiotherapist (Costa et al., 2021; Ascenso et al., 2021).

A study carried out in Portugal with 134 participants with fibromyalgia, evaluated the health-related quality of life (HRQoL) in secondary and tertiary care based on data collection through generic and specific questionnaires analyzing the way of daily life, clinical health status, socioeconomic factors, as well as psychological factors that involve pathologies such as anxiety and depression, where it was shown that fibromyalgia causes negative impact on HRQoL, with tertiary and secondary care being greatly affected respectively, therefore, they require management tactics for both analysis and application, taking into account means of coping and social support to improve the quality of patients' lives (Campos, 2021).

When assessing pain in the context of women with fibromyalgia, it is highlighted that Minimizing chronic pain is complex, as it can have its cause in several places, but it is fundamental, but resolution is essential, since 30% of the entire world is affected by pain impacts personal, economic and biopsychosocial life, so it is necessary "personalized multimodal and interdisciplinary treatment" monitoring, with support family, adequate lifestyle, integrative treatments, promoting quality of life. Because pain generates impacts including prejudice on the part of those who do not understand and judge, this pattern constructed by society needs to be deconstructed for better awareness and support for these women with fibromyalgia (Cohen et al., 2021; Costa; Ferreira, 2024).

Gois et al., (2025); Inácio et al., (2024), reinforce how much the topic of fibromyalgia is complex, and affects women negatively in the physical, mental, social, marital spheres, suffers prejudice from strangers. Therefore, physiotherapy is responsible for the team multidisciplinary through public policies that assist in planning, development and application of strategies that will benefit women with fibromyalgia. To working with fibromyalgia, a physiotherapist with extensive knowledge is required technical and practical, as well as effective communication skills with patients, their family members and the recognition of the entire team involved. Therefore, approaches such as meetings, use of communication channels and reports are essential. The relationship between therapist and patient is beneficial when it includes elements such as active listening, respect, professionalism, commitment, open, safe, humanized therapeutic connection with the patient, demonstrating clinical progress, confidence and patient education.



Physiotherapy techniques are efficient in controlling pain and improving the quality of life. of life of women with fibromyalgia. Methods such as kinesiotherapy, hydrotherapy and electrotherapy were highlighted as especially advantageous, favoring the reduction of pain, increased muscle flexibility and improved sleep. Also noteworthy is the importance of the multidisciplinary approach, which involves collaboration between physiotherapists and multidisciplinary team, as a condition for therapeutic success (Oliveira, Cardoso; 2024).

5-CONCLUSION

Throughout the preparation of this study, it unanimously presents how much Fibromyalgia and chronic pain directly and indirectly impact the quality of life of women, in various aspects, economic, social, in marital relationships, at work, in routine daily and in the psychological field. Therefore, the need for physiotherapist professionals specialized in this public is real and urgent, in addition to expanding this service beyond private clinics, such as for primary care, hospital care, home care, as well such as the development of public policies by government health entities, for greater educational dissemination and support for these women with fibromyalgia, as the authors make evident the lack of knowledge of the majority of patients who often limit only the symptoms.

The study is necessary to highlight how effective physiotherapy is for women with chronic pain resulting from fibromyalgia, as there are a wide range of techniques and resource that the professional can use to provide prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of these women. But it is worth emphasizing that since this is a pathology that is still difficult diagnosis due to the vast symptoms, and lack of knowledge of its etiology in such a way standardized, so more studies on the subject are needed, with more practical tests, research with a larger sample size, to validate more resources and techniques developed to provide quality of life to patients.



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