

Chronic generalised or Chronic back pain

Definitions

- Fibromyalgia (FM): generalised arthralgia and myalgia commonly associated with allodynia, fatigue, poor sleep pattern and psychological distress of at least 3 months duration. FM may occur with rheumatological, psychological or other conditions.
- Chronic back pain (CBP): longstanding mechanical back pain

Differential diagnoses to consider

1. FM: hypothyroidism, vitamin D deficiency, chronic arthropathy or myopathy, connective tissue disorder, drug withdrawal eg. Corticosteroids, depression, paraneoplastic syndrome
2. CBP: see red flags

Note: May not need to see a rheumatologist unless there are atypical features

Information Required

- Specific indication for referral at this time
- Duration of symptoms, History of trauma, psychosocial evaluation
- Physical examination findings, allodynia, sleep pattern
- Therapies trialled/opinions sought up to this point

Investigations Required (FM)

- CRP
- ESR
- CBP
- ECaLFTs
- TSH
- Vitamin D
- CK
- serum protein
- electrophoresis

Fax Referrals to Rheumatology Outpatients

Flinders Medical Centre (RGH)

Fax: 8204 6105 (Clinic B)

Repatriation General Hospital (FMC)

Fax: 8374 2591 (GP Liaison)

Red Flags

- 🚩 FM: does NOT cause elevated inflammatory markers, fever, weight loss or objective signs of joint or muscle disease
- 🚩 CBP: high inflammatory markers, night pain, history of malignancy, constitutional symptoms, acute on chronic back pain

Suggested GP Management

- FM:
 - Exploration of psychosocial issues
 - Encouragement of physical activity eg. Tai Chi, moving in warm water, aerobic exercise
 - Emphasis on self-management
 - Down play medical model
 - Consideration of amitriptyline 10-50mg NOCTE for sleep hygiene, duloxetine if mood disorder or pregabalin for pain
- CBP:
 - simple analgesia, weight management, emphasis on physical therapies, avoidance of opiates
- Clinic discharge criteria: after adequate explanation and education

Clinical Resources

- Education (Arthritis Australia – Moving Towards Wellness Course)
- <http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+information/health+information+for+the+clinician/lumbar+disorders>
- Fibromyalgia: a clinical review. Clauw DJ. JAMA 2014, 311(15):1547-55
- EULAR evidence based recommendations for the management of fibromyalgia syndrome. Carville SF et al. Ann Rheum Dis 2008, 67(4):536-41
- www.rheumatology.org.au/community/PatientMedicineInformation.asp

General Information to assist with referrals and the and Referral templates for FMC and RGH are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
1.0	August 2014	August 2016	Original