

[IMAGE]

## **Research Shows Massage Benefits Those Suffering From Fibromyalgia**

An estimated five million Americans suffer from fibromyalgia and more than 80 percent of those diagnosed are women. Fibromyalgia is defined as a chronic syndrome characterized by generalized pain, intense fatigue, joint rigidity, altered sleep patterns, headaches, anxiety and depression. It is a painful condition that many doctors have yet to fully understand. Those who suffer from this chronic disease often have a difficult time finding health care professionals who even understand how to fully address their pain and varying symptoms. However, research continues to show that massage therapy can be a wonderful drug-free solution to this debilitating problem.

A study published in the journal *Evidenced Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* examined whether massage-myofascial release therapy could in fact, improve pain, anxiety, quality of sleep, depression and the overall quality of life of those suffering from fibromyalgia. In this randomized controlled clinical trial, 74 fibromyalgia patients were randomly assigned to a massage-myofascial release therapy group and a placebo group. After 20 weeks, pain, anxiety, quality of sleep, depression and quality of life were determined at baseline, after the last treatment session, at one month and at six months.

Initial results showed that immediately after treatment and at one month, anxiety levels, quality of sleep, pain and quality of life did improve in the massage-myofascial group over the placebo group. The results also showed that at six months, the only significant difference was in the quality of sleep index. According to researchers, "because the cause of fibromyalgia syndrome remains unknown, treatment is usually in response to symptoms. However, the effectiveness of pharmacological and nonpharmacological treatments has been limited. The purpose of this study was to determine the benefits of massage-myofascial release therapy."

Researchers concluded that, "this study demonstrates that massage-myofascial release therapy reduces the sensitivity to pain at tender points in patients with fibromyalgia, improving their pain perception. Release of fascial restrictions in these patients also reduces anxiety levels and improves sleep quality, physical function and physical role. Massage-myofascial program can be considered as an alternative and complementary therapy that can achieve transient improvements in the symptoms of these patients."

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