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## Stability and change in fibromyalgia symptoms: A 2-year longitudinal study

Ann Vincent<sup>1</sup>, Kelly Kennedy<sup>2</sup>, Mary Whipple<sup>3</sup> and Loren Toussaint<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Mayo Clinic, Rochester, USA<sup>2</sup>Luther College, USA<sup>3</sup>University of Minnesota School of Nursing, USA

**Background & Aim:** Fibromyalgia is musculoskeletal pain disorder that impacts well-being and interrupts daily activities. The present study evaluated the stability and change of key fibromyalgia symptoms over a 2-year period.

**Methods:** Patients from an existing fibromyalgia registry were mailed seven validated questionnaires evaluating physical functioning, fatigue, daily limitations, pain, sleep levels, mental and physical well-being, and cognitive abilities. Of the 1303 patients contacted, 858 returned a completed survey. Approximately two years later, the patients who completed the baseline survey were sent a second and identical survey. A total of 450 patients returned the follow-up survey and are included in these analyses.

**Results:** Paired t-tests showed a significant change in fibromyalgia impact, fatigue, mental and physical health, pain, mood, and cognitive abilities ( $p < .05$ ) over the two-year period. Statistically larger decreases in mental health and increases in pain, as well as, vitality were observed. The remainder of the changes, while statistically significant, was smaller.

**Conclusions:** Although the results of our study suggest a slight trend toward improvement in several of the measures, changes were small to modest in size; and not significant according to minimum clinically significant difference (MCID) criteria over the two years of this study. Our study sheds light on the longer-term prognosis for worsening or improving symptoms in fibromyalgia. Specifically, our findings suggest that the long-term trajectory for change, in either direction, is considerably more stable and unchanging than existing research might suggest.

vincent.ann@mayo.edu