

Gabapentin may treat fibromyalgia pain

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U.S. scientists say the anticonvulsant medication gabapentin might be effective in treating pain and other symptoms arising from fibromyalgia.

The results stem from a randomized, double-blind study of 150 women and men with the condition, sponsored by the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases.

Dr. Lesley Arnold, director of the Women's Health Research Program at the University of Cincinnati's College of Medicine, and her colleagues found those taking gabapentin at dosages of 1,200 to 2,400 mg daily for 12 weeks displayed significantly less pain than those taking placebo.

Patients taking gabapentin also reported significantly better sleep and less fatigue.

"While gabapentin does not have Food and Drug Administration approval for fibromyalgia, I believe this study offers additional insight to physicians considering the drug for their fibromyalgia patients," said Dr. Stephen Katz, NIAMS director.

Fibromyalgia is a chronic disorder characterized by chronic, widespread muscle pain and tenderness, and is frequently accompanied by fatigue, insomnia, depression, and anxiety. It affects 3 million to 6 million Americans, mostly women, and can be disabling.

The research appeared in the journal *Arthritis & Rheumatism*.

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