

Young people report worse fibromyalgia than older patients, study shows

October 26 2013

It may seem counterintuitive, but young and middle-aged fibromyalgia patients report worse symptoms and poorer quality of life than older patients, a Mayo Clinic study shows. Fibromyalgia most often strikes women. It is characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain with fatigue, sleep, memory and mood issues. The research, one of several Mayo studies being presented at the American College of Rheumatology annual meeting, suggests the disorder plays out differently among different age groups.

Researchers studied 978 [fibromyalgia](#) patients and divided them into three [age groups](#): those 39 or younger, those 50 to 59, and those 60 or older. The younger and middle-aged patients were likelier to be employed, unmarried, smokers and have a higher education level, lower body mass index, more abuse history and a shorter duration of fibromyalgia symptoms than [older patients](#).

"Among the three age groups of young, middle-aged and older, symptom severity and quality of life differs," says senior author Terry Oh, M.D., a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. The study's findings were surprising, because quality of life and physical health are considered to be negatively associated with age, Dr. Oh says.

Dr. Oh notes that women in all three groups with fibromyalgia reported a lower quality of life than average U.S. women, and that the difference between their physical health and that of the average woman was more

significant than mental health differences, particularly in young patients.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

Citation: Young people report worse fibromyalgia than older patients, study shows (2013, October 26) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-10-young-people-worse-fibromyalgia-older.html>

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