

## Scientific Study Opinion

# Restorative Sleep Resolves Pain?

Sometimes researchers fail to read the research already done on their topic. The result is humorous, if not ridiculous, research findings which blatantly ignore known facts in favor of a one-sided viewpoint. It may even be that there is no intent to explore the whole issue and uncover the truth, but instead to support a biased view.

At its best, we get a good laugh from research like this. At its worst, patients are left to continue suffering, and perhaps even harmed.

Science, by definition, is supposed to be objective. Yet, countless discoveries are made which include scientists being paid to report a certain finding regardless of the truth. Pharmaceutical owned journals are also known to refuse to publish studies which do not support the sale of one or more of their drugs of interests.

In one such study, Davies and colleagues claim, "Poor sleep is associated with chronic widespread pain. Conversely, good-quality sleep may play a role in the resolution of pain symptoms."

Davies says, "Self-reported restorative sleep is independently associated with the resolution of chronic widespread pain and return to musculoskeletal health."

Yet, when we examine studies on fibromyalgia, it becomes clear that patients didn't just forget how to sleep well. The study implies that sleeping better may resolve pain.

Fibromyalgia is a disease process characterized by chronic widespread musculoskeletal pain, non-restorative sleep, fatigue, headache, morning stiffness, poor memory, difficulty concentrating, paresthesias (numbness and tingling) and overall impaired functioning in both social and occupational settings. Various "stressors" such as viral infection, physical trauma,

and exercise can both initiate and trigger fibromyalgia independent of sleep.

It is interesting to note that studies on sleep deprivation do not find these long-term symptoms and report that sleep deprivation leaves no lasting health effects. Yet, fibromyalgia is a chronic condition for which there is no known cure.

In patients with fibromyalgia, cerebral blood flow is altered. Studies show an association between fibromyalgia and a disruption of dopaminergic neurotransmission, which results in reduced dopamine metabolism within the pain neuromatrix.

Fibromyalgia involves abnormalities in peripheral and central sensory processing, which may be triggered by viral infections, Lyme disease, hepatitis C, hormonal and endocrine changes, drugs, vaccines, and physical trauma.

The nonrestorative sleep is obviously another symptom, not a cause of fibromyalgia. Simply drugging patients to sleep for profit will not cure their pain. The pain and sleep resolve simultaneously if and when the cause of fibromyalgia syndrome resolves.

One has to assume that researchers are well educated and not subject to periods of senselessness. So, either the researchers failed to see that fibromyalgia is defined by chronic widespread pain, or they have a conflict of interest in the sale sleeping pills for profit.

Irregardless, patient care declines and human suffering endures.

### Reference

Davies KA, Macfarlane GJ, Nicholl BI, Dickens C, Morris R, Ray D, McBeth J. Restorative sleep predicts the resolution of chronic widespread pain: results from the EPIFUND study. *Rheumatology (Oxford)*. 2008 Dec;47(12):1809-13. Epub 2008 Oct.

*Do Not Disturb*

