

Childhood adversities in patients with fibromyalgia and somatoform pain disorder

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Primary fibromyalgia is regarded as disorder with a complex symptomatology, and no morphological alterations. Findings increasingly point to a dysfunction of the central nervous pain processing. The study aims to discuss vulnerability for fibromyalgia from a developmental psychopathological perspective. We investigated the presence of psychosocial adversities affecting the childhood of adult fibromyalgia patients (FM) and compared them to those of patients with somatoform pain disorders (SOM) and a control group (CG) with medically explained chronic pain. Using the structured biographical interview for pain patients (SBI-P), 38 FM patients, 71 SOM patients, and 44 CG patients were compared on the basis of 14 childhood adversities verified as relevant regarding longterm effects for adult health by prospective studies. The FM patients show the highest score of childhood adversities. In addition to sexual and physical maltreatment, the FM patients more frequently reported a poor emotional relationship with both parents, a lack of physical affection, experiences of the parents' physical quarrels, as well as alcohol or other problems of addiction in the mother, separation, and a poor financial situation before the age of 7. These experiences were found to a similar extent in the SOM patients, but distinctly less frequently in the CG. The results point to early psychosocial adversities as holding a similar etiological meaning in fibromyalgia as well as in somatoform pain disorders. The potential role of these factors as increasing the vulnerability for fibromyalgia is discussed.