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Dietary aspects in fibromyalgia patients: results of a survey on food awareness, allergies, and nutritional supplementation.

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Abstract

Fibromyalgia (FM) is a common disease that results in poor quality of life, causing widespread musculoskeletal pain and stiffness, fatigue, sleep disorders, and cognitive impairment among other symptoms. The lack of an effective treatment makes necessary a multidimensional management. FM patients usually seek, from different sources, information about possible benefits from foods, nutrients, or diets. Our objective was to investigate the dietary awareness, food allergies and/or intolerances (FAIs), and nutritional supplement (NS) consumption of FM patients. A questionnaire was prepared with six questions regarding dietary habits, FAIs, and NS use. The questionnaire was filled out by patients recruited in local fibromyalgia associations. One hundred and one women were suffering from FM, diagnosed for more than 6 months, mean age of 53.88 ± 7.78 years; 30% of them changed their diet because of their disease, trying to improve it, and most of them were also using some NS; 7% of women in this group had FAIs, a figure slightly higher than the FAI prevalence in the general population (2-5%) and positively associated with consumption of supplements. Among NS users, some differences were observed; past NS users currently consume a wider range of products, more than new NS users. Magnesium was one of the supplements most recommended specifically for FM. Seventy-four percentage of these patients used NS following advice from health professionals. Once patients are diagnosed, they change their dietary habits and nutritional supplement intake, seeking nutritional strategies to improve their symptoms. Health professionals' advice plays a relevant role.

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