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## New 'reliable' FM diagnostic tool based on patient's gait

April 28, 2010

## Specific measures of impaired motion are indicative of FM, according to researchers at the University of Granada (Spain).

They report they've designed a reliable method that – combined with the diagnostic criteria of the American College of Rheumatology – helps to diagnose fibromyalgia on the basis of patients' gait (how they walk).

According to their studies, reported in *Clinical Rheumatology* ("Spatial-temporal parameters of gait in women with fibromyalgia"), parameters that are distinctly altered in fibromyalgia patients include: walk speed, step length, sole pressure on the ground, time on each foot, time on both feet, and step length.

The multidisciplinary study, led by Jose María Heredia Jiménez, from the Department of Physical Education, also concludes that these noticeable alterations of motion parameters are associated with low performance in other variables such as body constitution and psychosocial and strength tests, to ultimately "undermine patients' quality of life."

Accordingly, the group is currently studying the effect of multidisciplinary therapies based on physical activity, since "they are a good alternative to alleviate the symptoms associated with this disorder."

Subjects included 55 women diagnosed with fibromyalgia by an ACR physician and chosen by the researchers in collaboration with the Asociación Granadina de Fibromialgia (association of fibromyalgia in Granada). Simultaneously, 44 randomly chosen healthy women were included in the control group. All of them were subjected to a series of medical and physical tests.

Overall, the research reveals that FM patients' distinctive characteristics are not limited to tender points, and concludes that adding the group's gait test to tender point testing may enhance diagnostic reliability.

Though the group has also studied physical parameters in male FM subjects vs normal male controls, the results of that work are not reported in this announcement.

**Source:** based on University of Granada (Spain), news release, Apr 27, 2010, and article abstract.

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