



C. FIBROMYALGIA

Fibromyalgia is a rheumatic disease characterized by widespread muscle pain, alterations in sleep-wake rhythm, fatigue, headache, anxiety and depression. It is becoming a true epidemic, particularly in women of childbearing age for a variety of causes that I will briefly analyze. In my clinical practice almost all patients with fibromyalgia present with gastrointestinal signs and symptoms, with a pronounced meteorism which occurs particularly after ingestion of leavened foods rich in sugars (pizza is usually the most suspected food). These patients also have an altered intestinal permeability, so as to convince me, even after the positive resolution of hundreds of cases, that the condition of intestinal dysbiosis, rather than being considered an aspect of the disease, can be considered the cause. Unfortunately, dysbiosis is associated with altered immunity, multiple manifestations of food intolerances and/or allergies and a chronic condition of irritable bowel syndrome. But what is most worrying are the extra-intestinal manifestations of fibromyalgia that are largely related to intestinal candidiasis. *Candida* produces candidotoxin, a neurotoxic substance that acts on the central and peripheral nervous system by impairing the regulatory action of brain neurotransmitters; this not only causes the onset of psychological symptoms such as depression and anxiety, but also sleep disorders, waking unrefreshed, headache and migraine, fatigue, memory and concentration defects and widespread muscle-tendon pain. In practice, pain and tenderness are not related to organ disease and the countless tests that are prescribed to fibromyalgia sufferers are generally normal. This disorder could rather be interpreted as an alteration of perception, a neuroceptive dysregulation presumably due to the neurotoxic action of *Candida*. And unfortunately the proliferation of *Candida* is increasingly frequent, not only because of diets increasingly rich in refined sugars, but also because of the abuse of antibiotics, corticosteroids, and estroprogestinic drugs. If we review in detail the history of our fibromyalgia patients, we can easily identify a triggering event of dietary or pharmacological type. If fibromyalgia presents with the full range of symptoms, it is



difficult to improve this disorder with a balanced diet; it is necessary to have a prolonged aglucidic reset, which drastically reduces the virulence of *Candida*, in order to allow natural anti-candidal substances to rebalance the intestinal microbiota. There are many natural substances that are active against *Candida*; we generally use caprylic acid which is a fatty acid with 8 carbon atoms that is present in coconut oil, cloves (probably the most powerful anti-*Candida* spice), the extract of oregano and grapefruit seeds, but there are also others such as tea tree oil or garlic for example. In recent years scientific research has paid much attention to the functionality of mitochondria that seems to be compromised in fibromyalgia. So, as in many other diseases, especially degenerative diseases of the nervous system, we would be in the presence of a mitochondrial dysfunction. It should be emphasized that a diet very low in sugar as the Oloproteic Diet improves mitochondrial dysfunction, but it is appropriate in these cases, especially when fibromyalgia symptoms are severe, to supplement the diet with antioxidants that support mitochondrial function such as coenzyme Q10, Siberian chaga mushroom or lipoic acid. Two final recommendations for the fibromyalgia patient: modulate cortisol levels and combat stress with Ayurvedic herbs such as ashwagandha, and monitor vitamin D levels, a vitamin also critical for neuroprotection, which is almost always severely deficient in patients with fibromyalgia.

Lactoferrin can also be considered an ideal nutraceutical for intestinal dysbiosis and fibromyalgia. It is characterized by a relatively inexpensive production from cow's milk, high tolerability after ingestion, and well-demonstrated protective activities. It is an iron-binding protein, present in large quantities in colostrum and breast milk and in smaller quantities in external secretions (saliva and tears) and in digestive tract fluids. The capacity of lactoferrin to bind iron makes it a powerful antimicrobial molecule, because by subtracting iron from bacteria it prevents their multiplication. Moreover, it exerts a specific interaction with the cell wall of bacteria, viruses and parasites. It is an important component of polymorphonuclear leukocytes and is released in infected tissues



and blood during the inflammatory process, thus regulating the immune response and protecting against infection and septic shock. Intestinal dysbiosis and uncontrolled increase in intestinal colonization by *Candida albicans* may appear immediately, while systemic and chronic symptoms such as fibromyalgia may appear in the following years. In addition, other essential nutrients are also often deficient in patients with chronic candidiasis and fibromyalgia, such as zinc, magnesium, selenium, essential fatty acids, folic acid, vitamin B6, and vitamin A.

Candida overgrowth can therefore be prevented through healthy eating patterns with low glycemic and insulinemic diets such as the LOGI diet and treated with an aglucidic diet such as the Oloproteic Diet that I have been using for years. With the Oloproteic Diet and the supplementation with natural anti-candidal substances, I have treated hundreds of fibromyalgia patients, some of them very serious, with excellent results. Unfortunately fibromyalgia affects many people all over the world, including “excellent patients” such as the famous pop-star Lady Gaga.

One of my patients, Rebecca, 25 years old, came to me depressed and discouraged because the usual therapy with psychotropic drugs, muscle relaxants and painkillers had not had any positive effect. She had even suspended her university studies. The dietary therapy I prescribed for her had greatly improved the situation, Rebecca had resumed her studies with her newfound well-being and had even graduated. “Dear Lady Gaga,” wrote Rebecca, “I am twenty-five years old and about three years ago (after a very long period of medical visits) I discovered that I suffer from fibromyalgia: a complex and insidious disease that causes widespread pain and chronic fatigue, along with an infinite number of related symptoms (sleep disorders, gastrointestinal problems, chronic stress, depression and many others!). I honestly can’t even remember how much this disease has affected my life, but there are many episodes, especially from my childhood, that are still well imprinted in my mind. Among these I still remember a school trip and I remember that, while my friends were running between



the fountains in the garden, I had to wait for them downstairs with the teacher, because after a few steps I had breathlessness, palpitations and dizziness. And there are countless similar episodes that have marked my life so far. The worst thing is that it's a "ghost" disease: it's there but you can't see it. And therefore it is often not believed. All results from laboratory tests, all findings from clinical examinations show that you are perfectly healthy and often for this reason I have heard (even from doctors): "Maybe you're just stressed. Get some rest, take some antidepressants and you'll see that everything will pass!". Needless to describe how much anger and pain these phrases cause, especially because in the end you believe them and convince yourself that you are worthless. You can't go for a walk because you get tired immediately, you get up with fatigue and in pain, you have to start your day with pain in your hands, arms, legs, back, with your neck always blocked and with insomnia almost every night, a handshake, a more vigorous hug, a braking on the bus are part of the daily torture. Sometimes, even lifting a glass means having to strain. It is very difficult to convey how crippling this can be. Others see a seemingly "healthy" person: I'm not in a wheelchair, I'm not walking supported by crutches, I'm not in a hospital bed... With fibromyalgia you try to lead a life like everyone else: you can walk, go to work, go shopping, even go out with your friends at night. "How can you be sick? You must be faking an illness or exaggerating!" I hear myself saying. Yet, behind an appearance of normal life, there is a great deal of daily suffering: even the smallest movements for a fibromyalgia sufferer become difficult operations that require great effort and fatigue. And you get to a point where you can't take it anymore. If a "normal" person feels tired at the end of the day, they should know how someone with this disease feels. I had gotten to the point where I could no longer go to school and manage the house. Three years ago, after a visit to a good rheumatologist, a diagnosis finally arrived ... in a certain sense I felt relieved, I finally had the confirmation that I had something real and I wasn't "a weak person with little resistance to pain, hypochondriac and somatizing," as someone had assumed,



but unfortunately that was the beginning of another uphill road: I was taking antidepressants and muscle relaxants, but they weren't enough, I kept feeling bad, and they did nothing but make me dizzy. And around that time I started practicing yoga, which really helped me a lot to relax my stiffened muscles. But one day I realized that I couldn't go on like this, I had to take charge of my life and transform it. I thought that if I put my mind to it, I could make everything better. So I began to do some research on this disorder and on possible cures; I came to know a specialist, a nutritionist doctor, Dr. Giuseppe Castaldo, who was studying the treatment of fibromyalgia through nutrition. I had to carry out different dietary phases, from the depurative one that included twenty-eight days of only vegetables, liquids and supplements to the current one where I could eat almost everything (avoiding sugars, which according to this specialist, are the cause of muscle inflammation).

I'm not cured, because you can't cure fibromyalgia, the pains with climate changes are always present, but now the worst is over and my quality of life has changed considerably: anxiety and gastric problems have improved, but basically fatigue has decreased, especially mentally I feel much more active. In addition, since following this therapy, I no longer take any medication, but the food therapy I follow includes the intake of many natural herbal supplements. I wanted to share my experience first hand, not to be pitied or to make anyone feel sorry for me (that's the last thing I want!), but because I believed it was the only way to make everyone understand what fibromyalgia really is. The disease exists, we exist, we are 2,000,000 in Italy ... and fortunately there are those few, rare doctors who know and understand us.

Apparently we are normal people, but inside us there is so much suffering, it is not easy to live every day with chronic pain, it is devastating, it takes away your smile and your will to go on. I would like to talk more about this disease, I would like people to understand without stopping at appearances. To all other sufferers I can only say that we must try not to let fibromyalgia take control, it is part of us, but we are not just 'it,' and we should enjoy as much

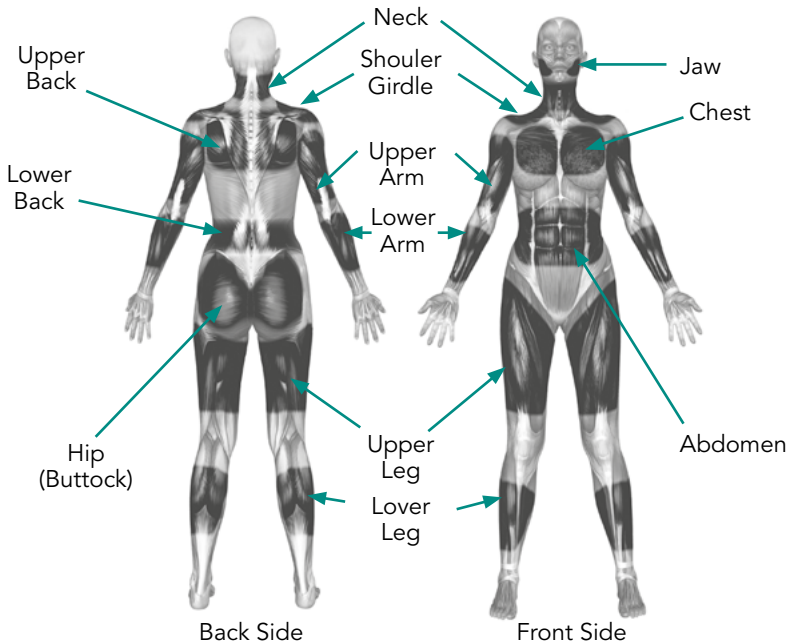


as possible the beautiful moments we have every day, because life is only one and it is not worth wasting it!”.

I don't know if Lady Gaga has ever read this letter, but surely what Rebecca writes gives us a good understanding of the suffering of fibromyalgia patients and their request for help.

Assessment of fibromyalgia

According to the ACR criteria, it is diagnosed in case of “widespread musculoskeletal pain (involving both sides of the body, above and below the waist, as well as the whole length of the spine), for at least 3 months, associated with pain in at least 11 out of 19 tender points.”



Determination of the Widespread Pain Index (WPI).
The WPI score can range from 0 to 19.



General symptoms, and particularly neurodegenerative and intestinal symptoms, are instead assessed with the Symptom Severity Score (SS-Score).

I-Symptom Severity Score (SS-Score)

Fatigue	
Waking unrefreshed	0 to 3 (up to 9)
Impaired concentration	

I-Symptom Severity Score (SS-Score)

Itching	Muscle pain
Wheezing	Irritable bowel syndrome
Raynaud's phenomenon	Fatigue/tiredness
Hives/welts	Thinking or remembering problem
Ringing in ears	Muscle Weakness
Vomiting	Headache
Heartburn	Pain/cramps in abdomen
Oral ulcers	Numbness/tingling
Loss/change in taste	Dizziness
Seizures	Insomnia
Dry eyes	Depression
Shortness of breath	Constipation
Loss of appetite	Pain in upper abdomen
Rash	Nausea
Sun sensitivity	Nervousness
Hearing difficulties	Chest pain
Easy bruising	Blurred vision
Hair loss	Fever
Frequent urination	Diarrhea
Painful urination	Dry mouth
Bladder spasms	

0 symptoms Give yourself a score of 0
 1 to 10 Give yourself a score of 1
 11 to 24 Give yourself a score of 2
 25 or more Give yourself a score of 3

SS score (I+II) = 0-12



With the Oloproteic Diet, the WPI and SS scale scores are rapidly lowered and it is not uncommon to see a reset of the scores, even though they were very high before nutritional therapy.

Here, I will share with you the stories of two of my patients.

THE STORY OF CRISTINA

Cristina is a 40-year-old woman, slightly overweight (BMI 27), diagnosed with fibromyalgia for many years. For a long time, she has struggled against this disease, going from one specialist to another, but without any significant result, if not the false belief to be a “depressed” person and therefore treated with antidepressant drugs. Her life took a dramatic turn during a meeting where I had publicly exposed my idea that fibromyalgia was essentially a disease related to intestinal dysbiosis and candidiasis and that a nutritional therapy, the Oloproteic Diet, could “silence” it. The woman came to the clinic hopeful but also a bit skeptical. She had been through a lot and it was not easy for her to believe in a sudden change in her disabling symptoms with nutritional therapy alone. As it had been for years, she got up tired and was tired all day, although she was a woman with many interests, mentally active and productively engaged in many social activities. But at home she arrived tired and without any energy to devote to herself and her family. Even playing with the children she loved had become an effort. Symptoms included several painful tender points, waking unrefreshed – a constant feature in fibromyalgia sufferers – fatigue and asthenia for the whole day, difficulty in concentration and memory. She also presented with irritable bowel syndrome, frequent migraine, dizziness, insomnia, nervousness, and shortness of breath. I explained that all these symptoms were the consequence of a neurotoxic action of the Candida that presumably had become virulent after repeated hormonal treatments to induce the second pregnancy. I also explained the features of the nutritional therapy that I was going to prescribe. During the visit she asked me a lot of questions that I answered in detail and with pleasure. Even though I prescribed a complex and in many ways unsociable therapy, she got up from the chair with a smile on her lips and told me, in a



resolute tone, that she would do everything by the book. During the 28 days of therapy she sent a few messages regarding small doubts and requests for clarifications. At the end of the therapy she came to the clinic with a shaped silhouette, a more seductive dress (Cristina was a beautiful woman), about 13 pounds (6 kg) less, and toned muscles and subcutaneous tissue. But the incredible thing was the total disappearance of the painful, asthenic symptoms, and the sleep disorders. All the symptoms complained of before treatment had “magically” disappeared, to her amazement. So, on the day of the follow-up visit, Cristina turned to me with an even brighter smile and said “If it was so easy, why did I have to suffer for all these years without the slightest improvement? Why has no one ever told me anything about it?” I believe that we should reflect on this sentence ...

THE STORY OF CATERINA

Caterina is a young woman suffering from fibromyalgia at only 24 years, an unusual age for the emergence of this disease whose onset occurs between 40 and 60 years. A student of Modern Literature, she is behind with her exams because of the almost debilitating symptoms that cause her fatigue throughout the day, tiredness in the morning and difficulty even in speaking. Her life is affected by an inexplicable state of widespread pain and profound asthenia 24 hours a day, which segregate her at home even on Saturday evening, the time of maximum expression of socialization and relaxation for a young woman of her age. She hesitantly started the Oloproteic nutritional therapy, and after a few days she stopped it. I spoke to her in a very categorical manner, explaining to her in an almost fatherly tone the need to restart the nutritional therapy, as it would have been beneficial for her university studies. And so it was! After just 15 days, she began to feel more energetic and took her last exams, obtaining top marks. On the day of the long-awaited follow-up visit, she confessed to me: “Doctor, you are a magician. You told me that the exams would get better and they did. I got top marks on my last two exams, and now I only have to write my dissertation.”