

Pain, Social Support, Role Load and Life Satisfaction in Women With Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Miryam Weiss^{1,2}, Michal Avrech-bar¹, Galia Rahav^{3,4}, Tami Bar-Shalita¹

¹Occupational Therapy department, School of Health Professions- Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, Israel, ²Day Rehabilitation Unit, Chaim Sheba Medical Center Tel-Hashomer, Ramat Gan, Israel, ³Sackler School of Medicine, Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, Israel, ⁴The Chaim Sheba Medical Center, Tel-Hashomer, Ramat Gan, Israel

Background: Individuals with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) have more physical limitations as well as reduced social functioning, participation in daily occupations and personal well-being, in comparison to individuals with other chronic illness. Nevertheless, reports on quantitative research are limited and occupational therapy literature on CFS is scarce.

Objective: To characterize pain sensitivity, social support, role load and life satisfaction among women with CFS, and to reveal the contribution of each to CFS symptom severity.

Methods: This cross-sectional study included 100 women aged 20-70: 40 diagnosed with CFS and 60 healthy controls. Participants completed the following questionnaires: (1) Schedule of Fatigue and Anergia, (2) The Satisfaction with Life Scale, (3) Modified Role Checklist, (4) MOS Social Support Survey, and (5) Pain Sensitivity Questionnaire.

Results: Findings demonstrate that women with CFS report less satisfaction with life and social support ($p=0.000$; 0.004 , respectively), show a higher level of sensitivity to pain ($p=0.001$), and demonstrate a different role load pattern, specifically a premorbid higher number of life roles compared to controls ($p=0.028$). Further, findings reveal that satisfaction with life and social support, together with sensitivity to pain, all contribute to CFS symptom severity (R^2 adjusted= $.499$, $p=0.000$).

Conclusion: This is the first study to investigate the interplay between these factors in CFS. Findings demonstrate that women with CFS could be characterized by having a history of enhanced number of roles, current pain sensitivity, and deficient social support and satisfaction with life. Occupational therapy has great potential in contributing to this under-treated population.