

A Case Report of
Fibromyalgia
Interprofessional Education

N.K.

Case Writer
IPE Pain Initiative

“Be your own advocate.”
A Case Report of Chronic Pain

Presenting Condition: “The quality of my pain depends on what is causing it.”

N.K. is a 51 y/o female wife and mother who has spinal stenosis, lumbar radiculopathy, myositis, fibromyalgia, and thoracic outlet syndrome. Four years ago, she sustained a whiplash injury from a motor-vehicle accident, which has since caused her persistent neck pain. Three years after the whiplash injury, N.K. was diagnosed with fibromyalgia and myositis in the lower extremities. She describes her onset of pain: “It started in the right foot with pain every time I would stand up and it grew up my leg and then to my spine”. Since her accident, she has had a series of other injuries that have made her pain worse. She explains that her pain levels vary with feelings of tingling, stabbing, and ache. N.K. does not favor the use of narcotics for managing her pain and instead chooses alternative methods for mediation through osteopathic manipulative treatment, exercise, diet, orthotic use, and nutraceuticals. She is currently unemployed—due to her physical limitations—but is looking for a position in finance. Although she struggles with some of her daily tasks, N.K. has a strong mind, and advocates for her own healthcare by both requesting medical records and researching her conditions in depth. The support she receives from her family on a regular basis helps her maintain a positive outlook on life.

Patient Profile:

Age: 51

Height: 5’9”

Weight: 229 lbs.

Language(s): English

Condition(s): fibromyalgia; spinal stenosis; myositis; cervical disc protrusion; vertigo; thoracic outlet syndrome; lumbar radiculopathy; PTSD

Past Medical History

Past Illnesses: Lyme disease; pleurisy; urinary tract infection

Past Injuries: Concussion; whiplash, sprained ankle; torn ligament; coccyx bruise; several falls onto back, hips, and knees

Immunizations: Up to date

Medications:

- Prescribed: neomyocin sulfate eardrops
- Previously prescribed: doxycycline; prednisone; steroid injections
- Over the counter: baby aspirin; Benadryl; Uristat; several supplements

Allergies: Penicillin-reaction: (unknown)
Pets-reaction: (unknown)
Eggs-reaction: (unknown)
Wool-reaction: contact dermatitis
Generalized sensitivity to medications

Surgical History: 1990 cesarean section
2006 tubal ligation
2010 hysterectomy secondary to large fibroids

Hospitalizations: Colonoscopy

Personal Health Influencing Behaviors:

Diet: Organic fruits, vegetables, eggs, and fruit juices; mostly grass fed chicken or turkey

Caffeine Use: One cup of coffee a day

Alcohol Use: Vodka with lime occasionally; “does help with pain”

Nicotine Use: None currently; was a heavy smoker previously

Illicit Drug Use: None

Exercise: Walks daily; gazelle machine; restorative yoga; acupressure mat occasionally. Is unable to run.

Sleep patterns: Always wakes up early; hard to sleep throughout the entire night; use of the Total Pillow aligns her spine during sleep.

Family Medical History:

Father: high blood pressure; colon cancer; heart disease; diabetes

Mother: sciatica; hiatal hernia

Children: healthy, twenty-two year-old son

Social History and Lifestyle: N.K. currently lives with her husband, dog, and cat. She enjoys both researching, and studying sociology and physical health. As an active learner, she is constantly gaining new information about nutrition, home remedies, and healthcare issues. N.K. is currently unemployed, but is looking for a position at a bank. In the past, she has worked in the fields of mental health and physical education. She has herself experienced physical and emotional abuse. Additionally, N.K. was exposed to Radon for several years at a previous home. The support she receives on a regular basis from her family helps her maintain a positive perspective on her life.

Glossary of Terms

1. **Cervical Disc Protrusion:** a condition where one of the intervertebral discs in the cervical spine (neck) has a bulge that's pressing upon main nerve roots.
2. **Doxycycline:** a tetracycline antibiotic used to treat bacterial infections and rosacea.
3. **Fibromyalgia:** a condition characterized by long-term, body-wide pain and tenderness in joints, muscles, tendons, and other soft tissues. Fatigue, depressed mood and sleep problems are also seen in almost all patients with fibromyalgia.
4. **Lumbar Radiculopathy:** a condition due to a compressed or irritated nerve root when it exits the spine in the lower back. The compressed nerve can cause pain, numbness, tingling, or weakness along the course of the nerve.
5. **Myositis:** inflammation of skeletal muscles.
6. **Neomycin Sulphate:** an antibiotic used to treat external ear infections caused or complicated by bacterial infection.
7. **Nutraceuticals:** a combination of the words "nutrition" and "pharmaceutical". It is a food product that reportedly provides health, physiological benefits and protection against chronic disease.
8. **Pleurisy:** inflammation of the lining of the lungs and chest (the pleura). It leads to chest pain when taking a breath or cough.
9. **Prednisone:** a steroid used to treat inflammation, severe allergies, complications of chronic illnesses, and other medical problems. It is also used to decrease cancer symptoms.
10. **Spinal Stenosis:** the narrowing of the spinal column that causes pressure on the spinal cord, or narrowing of the neural foramina (where spinal nerves leave spinal column).
11. **Thoracic Outlet Syndrome:** involves pain in the neck and shoulder, numbness and tingling in the fingers, and a weak grip. This occurs because of increased pressure of the blood vessels and nerves passing between the shoulder and collarbone.
12. **Uristat:** an over the counter drug that alleviates the painful and uncomfortable symptoms of a urinary tract infection.
13. **Vertigo:** a type of dizziness in which a person experiences the perception of movement. This is usually due to a dysfunction with the vestibular system.