

# Fibromyalgia

## Introduction

Fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) is a common chronic condition characterised by persistent, widespread pain and is associated with debilitating fatigue, sleep disturbance, impaired cognitive and physical function, as well as psychological distress.

There are no specific diagnostic tests for the condition and often patients present with multiple, fluctuant symptoms. This presents a diagnostic challenge for clinicians working in primary care.

Furthermore, the management of symptoms can be complex, requiring understanding of both pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments to effectively support patients who suffer from the syndrome.<sup>1</sup>

The implications of fibromyalgia syndrome are far reaching, not just in terms of primary care attendance, but economically as there is likely to be input from other services and people may be less likely to be able to work.<sup>2</sup>

The module has been developed based on discussions within a PBSGL focus group consisting of multidisciplinary primary care professionals.

After studying this module, you will be able to:

- Understand early appropriate assessment of patients with suspected fibromyalgia syndrome
- Have improved understanding of patient characteristics and co-existing conditions
- Address misunderstandings related to fibromyalgia syndrome
- Provide guidance on reaching a diagnosis of fibromyalgia syndrome, whilst excluding other causes for symptoms or recognising coexisting conditions
- Highlight effective approaches in communicating a diagnosis of fibromyalgia syndrome
- Improve understanding of self-management techniques
- Explore pain management strategies and understand the role of non-pharmacological management
- Emphasise the role of specialist services who can support those with fibromyalgia syndrome (physiotherapy, pain management specialists, psychologists)