

# Abstract

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## **The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal stress axis in fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome.**

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**BACKGROUND:** HPA axis abnormalities in FM, CFS, and other stress-related disorders must be placed in a broad clinical context. We know that interventions providing symptomatic improvement in patients with FM and CFS can directly or indirectly affect the HPA axis. These interventions include exercise, tricyclic anti-depressants, and serotonin reuptake inhibitors. There is little direct information as to how the specific HPA axis perturbations seen in FM can be related to the major symptomatic manifestations of pain, fatigue, sleep disturbance, and psychological distress.

**CONCLUSION:** Since many of these somatic and psychological symptoms are present in other syndromes that exhibit HPA axis disturbances, it seems reasonable to suggest that there may be some relationship between basal and dynamic function of the HPA axis and clinical manifestations of FM and CFS.

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