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THE USE OF MCGILL ILLNESS NARRATIVE INTERVIEW (MINI) IN FIBROMYALGIA PATIENTS. AN EXPERIENCE FROM SPAIN

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Introduction: The McGill Illness Narrative (MINI) is a semistructured, qualitative interview schedule, which is useful to explore individuals' illness narratives in sociocultural context. It has been used in first-time postmyocardial infarction patients and also in patients with hyperemesis gravidarum, but it has not yet been used in fibromyalgia.

Patients and methods: A study was conducted using McGill Illness Narratives (MINI) with 20 patients who were recruited from a referral Rheumatology Service during 2009 and 2010, and met criteria of the American Association of Rheumatology for fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) trying to explore:

Narrative of illness experience

Salient prototypes related to current health problem

Explanatory models

Help seeking and service utilization

Impact of illness

The interviews were carried out and audiorecorded and the narratives were analyzed according to their structure and content.

Results: The physical cause was the most common causal attribution. Most of them had been treated for different specialists, and reported problems in seeking diagnosis and help from professionals. Some patients were diagnosed by rheumatologists with celiac disease, lactose intolerance and undifferentiated spondylitis, termed "False Fibromyalgia". Like previous research, negative emotional states were correlated with worsening pain. Many changes were related in their way of life.

Conclusions: Qualitative studies are essential to complement quantitative research methods and are indispensable to understand FMS. The exploration of the explanatory models may stimulate exchange between disciplines and may give access to a popular cultural construct related to somatic conditions not yet documented in the literature.