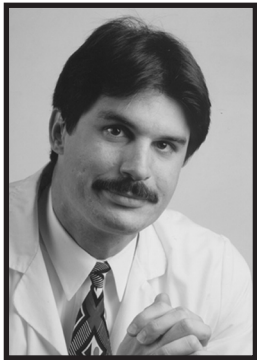


# FIBROMYALGIA

## *A State of Amplified Pain*

by Mark Pellegrino, MD

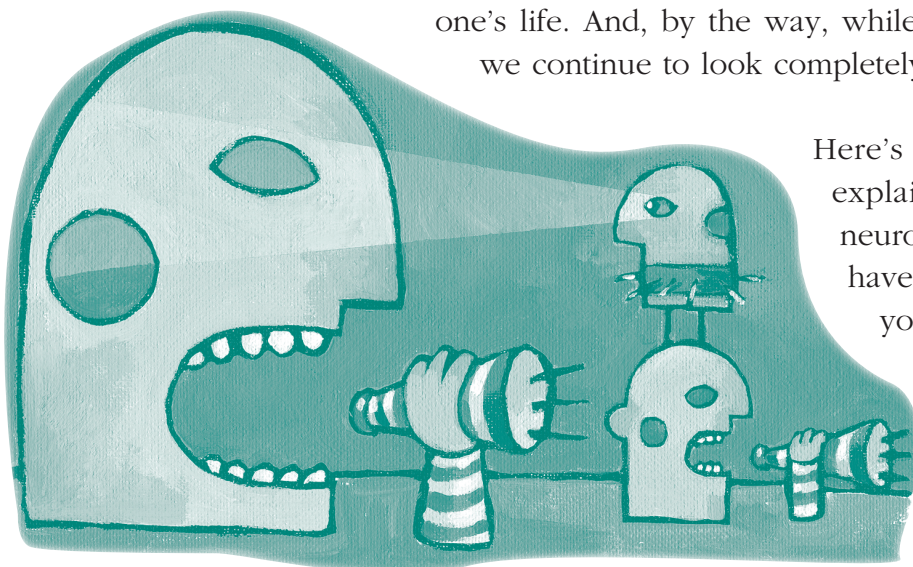


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*and in fact, has FMS himself. Dr. Pellegrino has authored numerous FMS books and articles both from a physician and patient perspective. He maintains an active medical practice, has cared for more than 15,000 FMS patients, and been named in the "Best Doctors in America". Dr. Pellegrino has been on the Health Points advisory panel since 1998.*

Many conditions can lead to permanent changes in the pain transmission mechanism and result in chronic pain that overwhelms the body's pain defense mechanisms. One such condition is near and dear to all of us, fibromyalgia. Fibromyalgia does not cause destruction along the pain pathways itself, but does cause chronic, abnormal changes along all the pathway components. This results in chronic pain via both peripheral (from skin, muscles and nerves) and central (from spinal cord and brain) neurological mechanisms. The end result of fibromyalgia's abnormal changes appears to be a state of pain amplification that causes severe generalized pain. Fibromyalgia is ultimately a disease of amplified pain.

Amplified pain is the result of our nervous system gaining the ability to *magnify* pain and losing the ability to *inhibit* pain. What comes in at a signal of "1" does not end up in the brain as a signal of "1" but as a signal of "10". Other non-painful signals get thrown into the pain amplification pathway and arrive at our brain as pain signals, too. The nerve pathways can also automatically "fire away" without any obvious noxious stimulus to cause spontaneous pain. These are not your everyday aches and pains but severe pains that cannot be ignored and can completely disrupt one's life. And, by the way, while all of this is happening, we continue to look completely normal on the outside!



Here's a different way of explaining the dysfunctional neurobiological problems we have in fibromyalgia. I hope you enjoy it. Don't be scared now!

*Continued*

# Fibromyalgia... Amplified Pain

*continued*

## Confessions of an N.E.O.

(Neuron Executive Officer)



Hi! I'm Gary Neuron of Central Nervous System Enterprises located at the corner of Brain and Spinal Cord Avenues. You might say I'm in the manufacturing business—I build pain pathways. I'm very good at what I do. I can take the tiniest of peripheral sensory signals, magnify their intensity tenfold and route them straight to the brain. My company has grown so fast in the past ten years, it's actually ridiculous. If they give awards for causing pain, I'd have to buy a planet just to hold them all.

Did I mention that I am very good at what I do? I must confess that I have many talents and that's what makes me so successful. I'm like a jack-of-all-trades, or as we say in the neuro world, a depolarizer-of-all-synapses. I'm going to share with you what makes me so successful. You don't have to like me, but you probably want to hear what I have to say.

First and foremost, I'm a great evaluator of potential recruits. Hey, if I'm going to build pain pathways, I need raw materials. I am constantly on the lookout for vulnerable candidates, people who are ripe to develop fibromyalgia. And I find them everywhere. I look for genetic patterns, a lot of major stresses and I follow the viral infections. I especially monitor whiplash victims and others with trauma. If your peripheral nerves are being challenged or struggling for any reason, I'm coming after YOU.

Secondly, I'm a huge advocate of organized labor. I give individual peripheral nerve signals the opportunity to unite with a combined voice, a loud voice that you can't ignore. I promise them amplified voices in a beautiful central nervous system network. Pain signals are the easiest to work with, but I listen to all sensory signals: touch, pressure, positioning and all the rest. I find a way to let them ALL be heard painfully!

You see, before I came along, these sensory signals were crying out weakly. They were constantly sending signals from different tissues, all scattered about, with no real purpose or direction. But I heard them and I found them and I built them a nice pathway and gave them direction and purpose. I smiled at them, pointed to the brain and told them to make as much noise on the way up as possible!

Once a pathway is built, it's like a paved highway that needs little maintenance. I'm proud of my engineering

skills. It may take me many months, sometimes up to a couple of years, but my pain roads are a masterpiece once they are done. They hold up indefinitely and allow continuous traffic from all directions,. Heck, I build roads to every part of the body, even places where you never thought fibromyalgia existed. Finding these remote locations is part of my Outreach Program. Why stop at the neck with a whiplash injury? I'll build those roads clear to your toes so they end up hurting just as much as your neck.

I am a computer whiz, too. I know how to press all your buttons to make you think of me all the time. I can amplify your pain. I can turn off your pain inhibitory circuits. I make your nerves hypersensitive. I TURN UP THE VOLUME!

I put pain into ordinary non-painful signals. I put more pain into the painful signals. My favorite trick is to create spontaneous pain when you're not doing anything! I'm really good at that.

Lastly, I'm very flexible and patient. Sure, I have my specific patterns and unique style, but I go with the flow. I can wait a long time for the right opportunity to develop. I'm strong.

I'm not invincible, I must admit. There are ways to try to beat me. You're probably wondering what they are. Well, I would be foolish to tell you, wouldn't I? I'm not stupid, you know. In fact, I'm very smart...did I mention that?

I have some advice for you, though that I will share. I work quietly so you can't hear me. If you're ever wondering whether you're getting fibromyalgia, stop what you are doing at once. Turn off any noises and listen very carefully. Do you hear anything? Anything at all? If not, you'd better be worried. BE VERY WORRIED!