Great information about staying healthy and the role massage therapy can play in your wellness program, all at your fingertips!

To learn more about how massage can benefit fibromyalgia patients, have a look at “Easing the Constant Pain” from the Spring 2010 issue of Massage Therapy Journal. Available online at → amtamassage.org/mtj

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Pain can make it difficult to enjoy everyday activities, but for fibromyalgia patients, pain can be constant, interfering with sleep, work and daily tasks. According to the American Chronic Pain Association, fibromyalgia affects more than 6 million Americans. The origins of this disorder are still relatively unknown.

Though there is no cure, massage therapy may be one way to make life a little easier for people with fibromyalgia. In 2010, Adelaida Maria Castro-Sánchez led scientists from the University of Almería in Almería, Spain, to consider the effects of myofascial therapy on pain, anxiety, quality of sleep, depression and quality of life in fibromyalgia patients.

Using a randomized-controlled study, researchers assigned 64 fibromyalgia patients to receive one of two types of therapy treatments over the course of 20 weeks. The experimental group received myofascial release therapy for 90 minutes once a week. The control group received a therapy that used a disconnected magnetic therapy machine for 30 minutes once a week. Their pain was assessed at baseline and at the end of the 20-week period, and then again at one and six months following the study’s completion.

Researchers found the experimental group experienced significantly improved anxiety, sleep, pain and quality of life—both immediately following the treatment and up to one month after. The control group did not reap any of these benefits. The six-month follow-ups, however, showed that improvements in sleep were the only difference between the two treatment groups.

A similar study led by Castro-Sanchez in 2011 further examined how fibromyalgia patients respond to massage therapy and found reductions in sensitivity to their pain. Additionally, these results showed many improvements that lasted as long as one year after the study’s completion.

What the Research Says
A wide variety of research has been done on the benefits of massage therapy. For more information, visit the Research section of AMTA’s website.