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## **The effect of balneotherapy at the Dead Sea on the quality of life of patients with fibromyalgia syndrome.**

**Neumann L, Sukenik S, Bolotin A, Abu-Shakra M, Amir M, Flusser D, Buskila D.**

Soroka Medical Center, Faculty of Health Sciences and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel. lily@bgumail.bgu.ac.il

Fibromyalgia (FS) is an idiopathic chronic pain syndrome defined by widespread non-articular musculoskeletal pain and generalised tender points. As there is no effective treatment, patients with this condition have impaired quality of life (QoL). The aim of this study was to assess the possible effect of balneotherapy at the Dead Sea area on the QoL of patients with FS. Forty-eight subjects participated in the study; half of them received balneotherapy, and half did not. Their QoL (using SF-36), psychological well-being and FS-related symptoms were assessed prior to arrival at the spa hotel in the Dead Sea area, at the end of the 10-day stay, and 1 and 3 months later. A significant improvement was reported on most subscales of the SF-36 and on most symptoms. The improvement in physical aspects of QoL lasted usually 3 months, but on psychological measures the improvement was shorter. Subjects in the balneotherapy group reported higher and longer-lasting improvement than subjects in the control group. In conclusion, staying at the Dead Sea spa, in addition to balneotherapy, can transiently improve the QoL of patients with FS. Other studies with longer follow-up are needed to support our findings.