

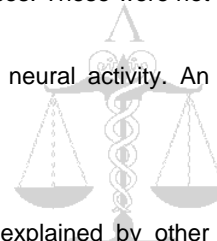
R.Kwaitek et al. Arthritis and Rheumatism (Dec 2000) Vol. 43 #12.

The brain scans of 17 women diagnosed with Fibromyalgia and 22 health women were compared. Scans were sensitive to blood flow in small volume segments of the brain.

Fibromyalgia is characterised by chronic pain among other symptoms.

Small reductions in blood flow were detected in the thalamus of the Fibromyalgia cases. These were not sufficiently distinct to be diagnostic.

The authors speculate that the reduced blood flow may be caused by reduced neural activity. An alternative is that the cases have less good circulation in this region.



Comment

Reduced blood flow could be associated with chronic pain, but could also be explained by other symptoms or even behaviors. If the differences could be reversed by therapy e.g. cognitive behaviour therapy then it would tend to indicate that they were acquired rather than innate.

Potential value for longitudinal studies. These would help establish the diagnostic status of Fibromyalgia and the cause of symptoms.