

JE Naschitz et al Journal of Rheumatology. June (2001) Vol. 28 #6 p 1356.

A study aimed at identifying differences between Fibromyalgia (FM) Syndrome and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS).

It is proposed that the Cardio-Vascular response of FM and CFS differs when cases are passively tilted from the horizontal towards the vertical (head up).

38 FM cases and 30 CFS cases were compared with 37 healthy normal controls (HNC).

Blood pressure and heart rate on laying were recorded in real time as each subject was tipped up on a tilting table.

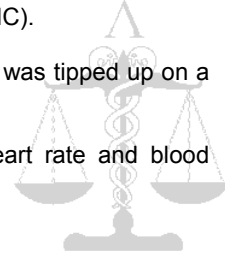
The researchers calculate a discriminant score (DS) based on differences in heart rate and blood pressure and their rates of change.

They define a DS >-0.54 as typical of CFS cases whereas, HNC are ≤ -0.54 .

Results show that DS values for FM and HNC were indistinguishable, and both remained distinct from CFS. Results were as follows (standard deviation in parenthesis):

FM = $-3.7(2.7)$,
HNC = $-4.6(2.2)$ and,
CFS = $+3.7(5)$.

Curiously, those FM cases diagnosed with CFS as a co-morbid condition were $-3.27(2.7)$ i.e. not distinguishable from HNC or FM in isolation.



Comment

The results suggest that FM and CFS must be in some way different, but it is not clear: what the explanation for this difference is, whether it is significant in terms of disability or why the standard deviations reported were so widely inconsistent.

FM and HNC were indistinguishable by this single test.

The finding that CFS has no effect on FM cases when co-presenting may cast further doubt on the validity of FM as a diagnosis. The proposed diagnoses of FM and CFS share many common features.