

## **Complex symptomology, neurophysiology of myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME): physiotherapy management**

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Approximately, 0.4% of the population is affected by chronic fatigue syndrome/ myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME), a disabling condition which is difficult to diagnose because of variations in aetiology and a lack of biomarkers.

CFS/ME is often used as an umbrella term for conditions which share similar symptoms.

These conditions include, but are not restricted to, hypermobility spectrum disorders (HSD), positional orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, and autoimmune conditions all sharing the debilitating symptom of fatigue.

Understanding how each of the body's systems interact to create efficient function is recommended when approaching a patient with such complex symptomology. It is important to recognise which of the myriad of symptoms relate to which system to appropriately manage it.

Individuals with a fatigue condition need to be understood, reassured, and educated regarding their complicated condition, to help them navigate and manage their many symptoms. Helping individuals to recognise specific pacing behaviours regarding each symptom, and encouraging them to modify their behaviour accordingly, allows the creation of a stable baseline of activity. Stability is important to establish, before increasing activity to improve proprioception, strength, and cardiovascular ability.

An understanding of how to manage a fatigue condition is more important than ever, in the event of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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