

# Prevalence of fibromyalgia: a survey in five European countries.

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## Source

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## Abstract

### OBJECTIVE:

A survey was performed in 5 European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain) to estimate the prevalence of fibromyalgia (FM) in the general population.

### METHODS:

In each country, the London Fibromyalgia Epidemiological Study Screening Questionnaire (LFESSQ) was administered by telephone to a representative sample of the community over 15 years of age. A positive screen was defined as the following: (1) meeting the 4-pain criteria alone (LFESSQ-4), or (2) meeting both the 4-pain and the 2-fatigue criteria (LFESSQ-6). The questionnaire was also submitted to all outpatients referred to the 8 participating rheumatology clinics for 1 month. These patients were examined by a rheumatologist to confirm or exclude the FM diagnosis according to the 1990 American College of Rheumatology classification criteria. The prevalence of FM in the general population was estimated by applying the positive-predictive values to eligible community subjects (ie, positive screens).

### RESULTS:

Among rheumatology outpatients, 46% screened positive for chronic widespread pain (LFESSQ-4), 32% for pain and fatigue (LFESSQ-6), and 14% were confirmed FM cases. In the whole general population, 13 and 6.7% screened positive for LFESSQ-4 and LFESSQ-6, respectively. The estimated overall prevalence of FM was 4.7% (95% CI: 4.0 to 5.3) and 2.9% (95% CI: 2.4 to 3.4), respectively, in the general population. The prevalence of FM was age- and sex-related and varied among countries.

### CONCLUSION:

FM appears to be a common condition in these 5 European countries, even if data derived from the most specific criteria set (LFESSQ-6) are considered.