

Valley Medical First in U.S. to Implement Breakthrough MRI Standard

for Patients with Fibromyalgia or Unexplained Widespread Pain

Fibromyalgia (FM) is a complex condition of chronic, widespread pain affecting about four percent of people in the U.S. Another six percent have unexplained chronic, widespread pain (CWP). In a four-year pilot study at



Images courtesy of Valley Diagnostic Imaging Services -Olympic Building

VMC, radiologists added two views of the neck—flexing forward and extending back—to a standard MRI. These dynamic images showed pressing or pinching of the spinal cord at the neck in 71 percent of patients with FM and in 85 percent of patients with CWP. This wasn't seen with a standard MRI.

“This tells us that dynamic imaging has the potential to help improve management of widespread pain in these patients,” said Andrew Holman, MD, Pacific Rheumatology Research, Inc., rheumatologist and lead researcher of the study. “Understanding the origins of pain will help us offer our patients more effective treatment.”

Of those with this cervical cord condition, 85 percent were successfully



treated nonsurgically with a new, specialized physical therapy program. The protocol is now being implemented in several hospitals throughout the U.S,

including the University of Texas, Oregon Health & Science University and Johns Hopkins University in Maryland.

The MRI protocol, the largest series to date, was recently featured as the cover story in *The Journal of Pain*¹, and made possible with the support of Kenneth Reger, MD, radiologist, and Valley Radiologists. Over 1,800 patients with FM or CWP have now received these additional MRI views in the course of routine rheumatology care.

¹ *The Journal of Pain*, Vol 9, No 7 (July), 2008: pp 613-622. Available online at www.sciencedirect.com.

Ensuring Medication Safety

Be Your Own Advocate in Medication Management:

- Keep your doctor informed about every medication you take, both prescription and over-the-counter (OTC).
- Carry your current medication list with you at all times, and give a copy to a nearby family member in case of emergency.
- Talk to your doctor before making any changes to your drug regimen.

For a VMC physician, call our free referral service, 425.656.INFO.

Managing pharmaceuticals is a complex job. At Valley Medical Center, we meet and exceed industry standards with an interdisciplinary team, leading-edge technology and collaborative workflow.

“Our whole team works to increase efficiency and reduce medication errors and the possibility of drug interactions,” said Ron Williams, Pharm.D., director of pharmacy. “We separate and safeguard all drugs, particularly high-risk drugs and those that sound or look alike. We scan all orders digitally, which reduces handwriting and abbreviation errors. Barcoding ensures the right medication goes to the right patient, at the right dose, at the right time.”

Our staff members use MedsTracker® to reconcile medications a patient takes at home with those given in the hospital. MedsTracker provides computer checks as patients move through their hospital stay and again at discharge. Caregivers and pharmacists also review vital signs and lab reports to ensure medications are dosed appropriately to reflect current conditions.

MedsTracker even follows patients in our primary care clinics. Staff members review and update each patient's medication list during their visit and provide a printout of all prescriptions, with clear instructions for any new medications. New prescriptions can be faxed directly to a patient's preferred pharmacy.

