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The Power of Flowers May Ease Fibromyalgia Symptoms

Pauline Anderson
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Participating in a flower-arranging course may improve both pain and psychiatric symptoms for patients with [fibromyalgia](#), new research suggests.

The findings highlight the potential benefits of floristry as occupational therapy to improve the quality of life of patients with fibromyalgia.

Coinvestigator Howard Amital, MD, head of the Center for Autoimmune Diseases, Sheba Medical Center, Tel-Hashomer, and professor of medicine at the Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel-Aviv University, Israel, noted that flower arranging is particularly effective because it's a "multistimulation therapy."

It affects different senses that "all coincide and produce a very positive effect on the patient," Amital told *Medscape Medical News*.

It affects different senses that "all coincide and produce a very positive effect on the patient," Amital told *Medscape Medical News*.

He added that it's important for clinicians to hear about nonpharmacologic therapies for fibromyalgia, which is why he sought to have the study published in a medical journal.

The findings were [published online](#) in the July issue of the *Israel Medical Association Journal*.

Creating Bouquets

Fibromyalgia is characterized by chronic, widespread pain and fatigue and is often accompanied by somatic syndromes such as irritable bowel and migraines. Patients may also present with mood and [anxiety disorders](#).



Worldwide, fibromyalgia affects 2% to 4% of the population. It mostly affects women.



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Little is known about the pathogenesis of the syndrome, so treatments primarily focus on alleviating pain and improving quality of life. Experts recommend a multimodal approach that includes aerobic exercise and cognitive-behavioral therapy in addition to pharmacologic regimens.

The current observational study included 61 adult female patients (mean age, 51 years) who had been diagnosed with fibromyalgia.



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The women completed a 12-week flower design course that included weekly sessions under the supervision of a trained florist. The participants learned to create flower bouquets that they could take home.

Two consecutive groups participated in the study. The first group participated from week 1 to week 12, and the second, from week 12 to week 24.

At baseline, 12 weeks, and at study completion (week 24), the researchers measured a number of fibromyalgia disease-activity indices. Assessment tools included the 36-item Short Form Survey (SF-36), the Brief Pain Impact

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Questionnaire (BPI), the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS), tender-point count, and the Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire (FIQ).

The study also assessed [depression](#), using the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HDRS), and anxiety, using the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAMA).

The two groups were similar with regard to mental and physical health at baseline, but the VAS score was significantly higher in group 1, the first group to complete the course, than in group 2 (mean, 8 vs 7, respectively; $P = .01$).

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