

Jones, K. D. et al., "Fibromyalgia is Associated with Impaired Balance and Falls," *J Clin Rheumatol* 15(1) (2009): 16-21. PMID: 19125137

Methods. Thirty-four FM patients and 32 age-matched controls were administered the Balance Evaluation-Systems Test (BESTest), rated their balance confidence with the Activities-Specific Balance Confidence (ABC) Scale, and reported the number of falls in the last 6 months. The Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire was used to assess FM severity.

Results. FM patients had significantly impaired balance in all components of the BESTest compared with controls. They also scored more poorly on balance confidence. Overall FM severity (Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire) correlated significantly with the BESTest and the ABC scale. The BESTest and ABC correlated significantly with 6 commonly reported FM symptoms (excluding pain). FM patients reported a total of 37 falls over the last 6-months compared with 6 falls in healthy controls.

Conclusion. FM is associated with balance problems and increased fall frequency. Patients were aware of their balance problems. These results suggest that FM may affect peripheral and/or central mechanisms of postural control. Further objective study is needed to identify the relative contributions of various neural and musculoskeletal and other impairments to postural stability in FM to provide clinicians with methods to maximize postural stability and help fall prevention.