

Ed Swierczek, a senior claims representative for a company that assists disability claimants, recently provided some good advice for fibromyalgia patients who are applying for Social Security.

According to Mr. Swierczek: "...it is still vital that patients let their doctors know about their symptoms at every visit...Let them know you are having muscle pain, let them know you are not getting restful sleep. Encourage your doctor to include in his or her physical examination the requisite tender point examination if you have not received one. This is important because the [Social Security] adjudicators want to see some evidence of clinical findings to help establish a diagnosis. Having the appropriate tender points adds further credence to the presence of FMS [fibromyalgia]."

Social Security's criteria for establishing fibromyalgia as a medically determinable severe impairment includes:

1. Evidence of widespread pain for at least 3 months;
2. Pain present on palpation in at least 11 of the 18 tender point sites as identified by the American College of Rheumatology and the Centers for Disease Control;
3. Evidence of morning stiffness and/or stiffness after sitting for a short period of time;
4. Fatigue is present.

At each visit your doctor should note each clinical symptom and its severity, so that a contemporaneous, written clinical record will be available to Social Security as evidence of the chronicity and severity of your illness and disability.

(Source includes insurancenews.net, 5/8/11)