

Assistive Devices and Adaptive Strategies for Children with Fibromyalgia

Chanika Assavarittirong*

Department of Rheumatology, Poznan University, Poznan, Poland

ABOUT THE STUDY

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, and heightened sensitivity to touch. While commonly associated with adults, children can also be affected by this condition. Managing fibromyalgia in children poses unique challenges due to their developmental needs and the impact on their daily activities. Assistive devices and adaptive strategies play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for children with fibromyalgia, enabling them to navigate the physical and emotional aspects of their condition.

Understanding fibromyalgia in children

Fibromyalgia in children is often underdiagnosed or misdiagnosed due to its complex and overlapping symptoms with other conditions. The pain experienced by children with fibromyalgia can affect their ability to engage in regular activities such as playing, attending school, and socializing. Additionally, the condition may have a significant impact on their mental health, leading to anxiety and depression.

Assistive devices

These devices are instrumental in supporting children with fibromyalgia in their daily lives. These devices are designed to alleviate pain, enhance mobility, and promote independence. Some common assistive devices include:

Ergonomic seating: Specialized chairs and cushions designed to provide optimal support for children, reducing pressure on sensitive areas. Adjustable desks to accommodate different positions and promote proper posture during activities like studying or playing.

Orthopedic mattresses and pillows: Specially designed mattresses and pillows that offer better spinal alignment and support, reducing pain and discomfort during sleep.

Joint protection aids: Adaptive utensils with larger handles, making it easier for children to grasp and manipulate objects during meals. Ergonomic writing tools that reduce strain on the hands and wrists during writing and drawing activities.

Mobility aids: Canes or walking sticks to provide support during ambulation, especially on days when joint pain and fatigue are more pronounced. Wheelchairs or scooters for days when mobility is severely compromised, ensuring that children can still participate in various activities without overexertion.

Temperature control devices: Wearable cooling or heating devices to help regulate body temperature, as fluctuations can exacerbate symptoms in children with fibromyalgia.

Technology-based assistive tools: Voice-activated devices and software that enable hands-free operation of electronic devices, minimizing physical strain.

Adaptive strategies

In addition to assistive devices, implementing adaptive strategies is essential for managing fibromyalgia in children. These strategies focus on modifying activities, environments, and daily routines to better accommodate the unique needs of each child:

Education and awareness: Raising awareness among teachers, classmates, and school staff about fibromyalgia to foster understanding and support within the educational environment. Educating the child about their condition, helping them develop self-awareness and communication skills to express their needs.

Individualized treatment plans: Collaborating with healthcare professionals to create personalized treatment plans that address the specific symptoms and challenges faced by each child. Regularly reviewing and adjusting treatment plans based on the child's evolving needs.

Pacing and energy conservation: Teaching children the importance of pacing themselves and incorporating regular breaks during activities to prevent overexertion. Implementing energy conservation techniques to help manage fatigue, such as breaking tasks into smaller, manageable segments.

Psychosocial support: Providing access to counseling and support groups to address the emotional impact of fibromyalgia on children, promoting mental well-being and resilience.

Inclusive physical activities: Encouraging participation in low-impact and adaptive physical activities, such as swimming or

Correspondence to: Chanika Assavarittirong, Department of Rheumatology, Poznan University, Poznan, Poland, E-mail: assavarittirongca@outlook.com

Received: 05-Feb-2024, Manuscript No. RCR-24-30188; **Editor assigned:** 08-Feb-2024, PreQC No. RCR-24-30188 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 23-Feb-2024, QC No. RCR-24-30188; **Revised:** 01-Mar-2024, Manuscript No. RCR-24-30188 (R); **Published:** 08-Mar-2024, DOI: 10.35841/2161-1149.24.14.390

Citation: Assavarittirong C (2024) Assistive Devices and Adaptive Strategies for Children with Fibromyalgia. *Rheumatology (Sunnyvale)*. 14: 390.

Copyright: © 2024 Assavarittirong C. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

yoga, to maintain flexibility and strength without causing undue stress on the joints.

Flexible school policies: Collaborating with schools to establish flexible attendance and assignment policies, allowing children with fibromyalgia to manage their academic responsibilities without unnecessary stress.

Challenges and future directions

Despite the advancements in assistive devices and adaptive strategies, challenges persist in addressing the multifaceted nature of fibromyalgia in children. Limited awareness, financial constraints, and the need for ongoing research to refine existing interventions are some of the obstacles that must be overcome.

Interdisciplinary approaches: Fostering collaboration between healthcare professionals, educators, and families to develop comprehensive strategies that address the physical, emotional, and educational aspects of fibromyalgia in children.

Technological innovations: Continued development of technology-based solutions, including virtual reality therapies, wearable devices, and smart home technologies, to further enhance the effectiveness of assistive tools.

Advocacy and education: Advocating for increased awareness and understanding of fibromyalgia in children within the healthcare, education, and community sectors to reduce stigma and improve support systems.

Research on pediatric fibromyalgia: Conducting further research on the specific needs and manifestations of fibromyalgia in children to inform the development of targeted interventions and treatment modalities.

Accessible and affordable solutions: Ensuring that assistive devices and adaptive strategies are accessible and affordable for all families, regardless of socioeconomic status, to promote equity in healthcare.

Assistive devices and adaptive strategies play a pivotal role in empowering children with fibromyalgia to lead fulfilling lives despite the challenges posed by their condition. A holistic approach that combines technological advancements, educational initiatives, and ongoing research is crucial to improving the quality of life for these children and fostering a supportive environment in which they can thrive.