

FAST FACTS: Polymyalgia Rheumatica (PMR)

Polymyalgia Rheumatica (PMR) is an inflammatory condition causing muscle pain and stiffness in the neck, shoulders, upper arms, hips, and thighs. PMR can start quickly and generally affects people over the age of 65 and is rare in people under 50 years. The pain may be worsened by joint movement and be severe enough to limit activity. The stiffness usually occurs early in the morning following nighttime rest. PMR is related to and may coexist with giant cell arteritis, another inflammatory disease that causes headaches, jaw pain, and visual impairment. PMR and giant cell arteritis may be variations of the same disease and the overlap of diagnoses is common. PMR affects females twice as often as males. Caucasians are more frequently affected than African Americans. These older adults may also have anemia.

Assessment

- Impaired Range of Motion
- Location of pain: morning stiffness and bilateral shoulder aching is often the first symptom; neck, hip, or thigh
- Low-grade fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Unintended weight loss
- Elevated sedimentation rate
- Insomnia

Interventions

- Physical therapy
- Healthy diet
- Regular exercise as tolerated
- Sleep hygiene
- Assistive devices
- Pharmacological treatments as prescribed (initial onset and ongoing and tapering of medications as needed, e.g. low dosage prednisone, methylprednisolone)
- Fever-reducing over-the-counter medications

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References

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