Breaking Thru
the Fibro Fog

Scientific Proof
Fibromyalgia is Real!

Kevin P. White, MD, PhD

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How many ears must one man have
before he can hear people cry?

Blowin’ in the Wind
Bob Dylan

ABOUT THE BOOK

Did you know that fibromyalgia is more common in Bangladesh and Pakistan than any country in North America or Western Europe?

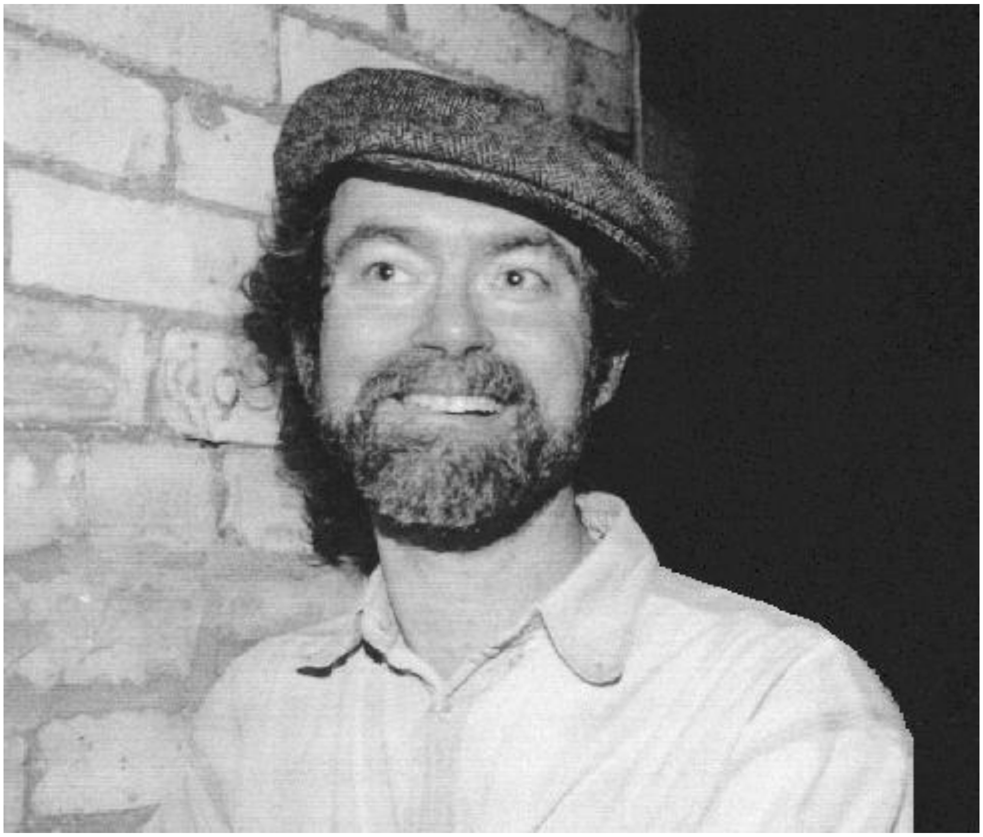
So much for the argument some critics use that fibromyalgia only exists because of wealthy western world insurance and compensation programs.

Fibromyalgia (FM) is a long-term, often disabling disease that affects up to one in ten women and one in sixty males over the course of their lifetime; and yet many – including many in the healthcare and legal professions – fail to accept that it even exists, or that it can possibly be as disabling as patients say. Over the years, this has led to tremendous hardship for FM sufferers, as they struggle to make others, sometimes their own family and friends, sometimes their employer or own doctor, believe them.

This book is for all of you; and for those who love you; for those who employ you; for all the doctors and lawyers and others who seek to defend you and your rights; and for those who just want to read what the scientific evidence is and then decide for themselves. It contains not only clear, detailed explanations, but scientific references, a glossary of terms, a list of referenced authors, and an index to aid those who really want to explore the science behind this disease.

Fibromyalgia is real. This book should leave no room for doubt.

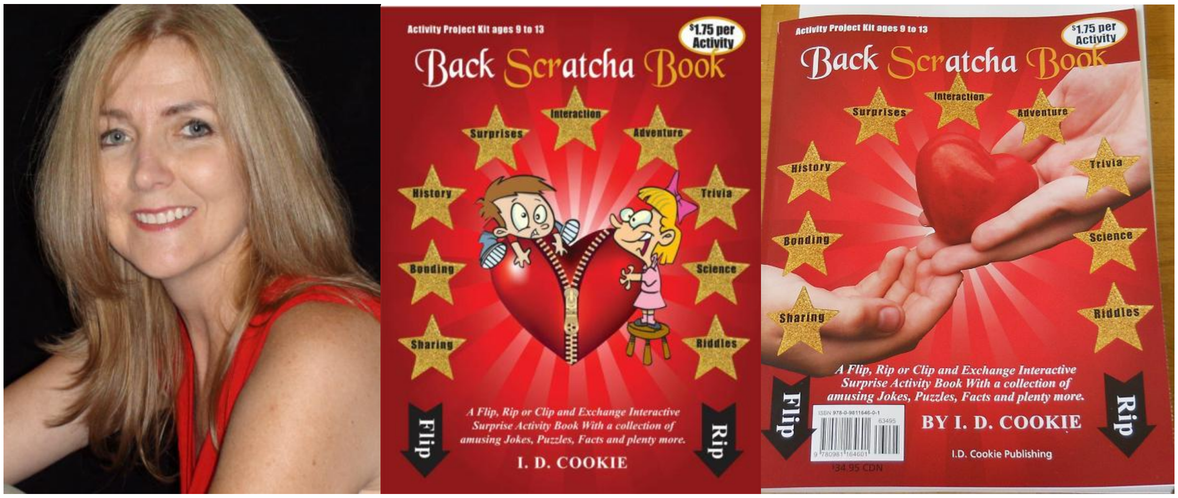
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



With a medical degree, training in two specialties and a further doctoral degree in medical research, Dr. White has been an internationally recognized expert in fibromyalgia treatment and research, fibromyalgia patient advocate, and former university Teacher of the Year. Now retired from active practise, he has turned to writing, having already written four novels, nine children's books, a book of inspirational essays and, as a singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, over 400 songs. In this newest book, Dr. White returns to his roots in medical practice and research, trying to help millions of fibromyalgia sufferers with a book that, once and for all, tells all that FM really is real.

ABOUT THE BOOK'S COVER

The cover was designed by Darlene Steele, an amazing woman who epitomes what this book is all about. She was an extremely busy office manager overseeing dozens of employees and operations while raising two daughters all on her own when, five years ago, she suddenly developed fibromyalgia and became unable to function in the workplace. Instead of giving up she, like Dr. White, turned to writing; and it was through a newspaper article announcing the release of one of her books that Dr. White learned her story. Finding out that she had designed the covers of her own book entirely herself, Dr. White asked her to design the cover to this book; and seeing the result, all his books. Though Ms. Steele still cannot function is a demanding workforce, it is clear that her brilliance and creativity are far too special to be wasted.



Darlene Steele (pen name I. D. Cookie) and her own book

CONTENTS

PART I
FIBROMYALGIA: WHAT IT IS & ISN'T

PART II
TWELVE SCIENTIFIC REASONS FIBROMYALGIA IS REAL

PART III
TRAUMA, DISABILITY AND DYLAN

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the millions around the world who have fibromyalgia and have had to suffer in silence. May you now be heard!

And it is especially dedicated to my sister, Barbara Roy. May you soon return to full health and enjoy it for many years to come.

INTRODUCTION, BY DR. WHITE

WHY I'M WRITING THIS

I was seven years into my medical training towards becoming a practicing pain specialist before I ever heard the term 'fibrositis'. Not once did I recall it having been mentioned in medical school or during my residency training in Internal Medicine, until I went to a 3-day symposium in Napa, California, on arthritis and rheumatism. The lecture on fibrositis was the last one given, over the final lunch. Many attending the symposium had already left. Those who hadn't left mostly stayed for the fancy lunch. I listened to what this specialist was saying and, I am sorry to say, at some level thought he was some sort of snake oil salesman, trying to sell me on some disease without any physical or laboratory signs, and without any changes apparent on X-ray, CAT scan, MRI or any other imaging technique. It sounded a bit like hocus-pocus to me.

It was almost a year later, months into my own specialty training in Rheumatology (specializing in diseases of the musculoskeletal system, like bones and joints) that I saw my first 'fibrositis' patient, though now the disorder was more often called 'fibromyalgia'. Over the next ten years of training and my own practise, I probably saw two to three thousand more such patients; and though different in some ways, there were so many things they all had in common... the pain everywhere; the extreme fatigue; the poor sleep; the problems with memory.

Over this time, I had obtained a second doctoral degree (PhD) in medical research, to go along with my MD degree, so I had developed into a pretty critical thinker. That critical thinking led me to really look into this condition that I wasn't sure I believed in or not. Over time, I came to believe in it more and more. And, over time, I came to see how fibromyalgia patients were being denied so many rights afforded patients with other painful conditions, like arthritis and heart disease. Many were denied disability payments when they became unable to work. Many essentially were told by doctors and insurance companies and lawyers and judges and friends and family members that they just needed to “snap out of it.” Repeatedly, I read opinion papers – almost exclusively written by doctors who hadn’t done a scrap of research in the area or, often, in ANY area - that fibromyalgia wasn’t real; that doctors who supported this diagnosis were doing more harm than good. Finally, I wrote an opinion paper myself, called **Fibromyalgia: The Answer Is Blowin’ in the Wind** (Journal of Rheumatology, 2004;31: 636-9), in which I poked holes in every single one of the arguments that I had heard raised against fibromyalgia. Of all the scientific papers and book chapters and other medical writings I have done to date, I consider that one opinion paper the crowning accomplishment of my career. I see it everywhere on the internet. In fact, if you Google search my name, that paper is the very first thing that appears.

This book is that opinion paper expanded, and written in a way such that patients and doctors and lawyers and loved ones of patients and anyone else who wants to find out why fibromyalgia (FM) truly exists can really delve into it. I have included the scientific references on which I base my arguments and conclusions, including many scientific papers I published myself.

Writing this book has been difficult, because of the diverse audience this book is intended for. I have wanted, on one hand, to make it easy to read, even for those with no or next to no medical or scientific background. On the other hand, I also want it to be informative and of use to doctors, lawyers, and other professionals who want to delve more into the science of what I’m writing (hence, the glossary of terms, index, lists of referenced researchers and authors, and a complete list of references to papers and study results that have been published in various scientific journals). I hope that I have achieved that delicate balance, so everyone can read and get something useful from this. My ultimate goal for this book is that it will help those with fibromyalgia get back some of the respect and rights that every single person deserves.

Kevin P. White, M.D., Ph.D.