



# Systematic Review of ME/CFS Treatment

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## Current Systematic Review: (1988 through Jan 2019)

- Adds to 2014 AHRQ Systematic Review  
“Diagnosis and Treatment of ME/CFS” (2014 & 2016)
- Evaluates evidence in children (in addition to adults)
- Considers management of symptoms
- Stratifies findings by ME/CFS case definition
- Assesses harms and benefits of diagnosis and treatment

# Stakeholder Engagement for Current Review

- Stakeholders were involved as Key Informants in developing Key Questions to guide the review
  - ME/CFS clinical and research experts
  - Individuals representing patients' perspectives
  - Individuals with family members with ME/CFS



# Systematic Review: Key Questions

- In patients undergoing evaluation for possible ME/CFS, what is the frequency of non-ME/CFS conditions (*co-morbidities*)?
- What are the benefits and harms to the patient of diagnosing ME/CFS vs. non-diagnosis?
- What are the benefits and harms of therapeutic interventions for patients with ME/CFS, and how do they vary by patient subgroups?

# Status for Current Systematic Review

- Review completed by the contractor OHSU
- Draft report cleared by CDC
- Federal Register Notice (FRN) for public comments now being reviewed
- Final report will incorporate the comments from the public and peer review
- New studies identified from an updated search in 2020 will be incorporated in the final report

# Bottom Line from Current Systematic Review

Essentially no therapeutic advances:

- Limited evidence on medications for ME/CFS, which was insufficient to draw conclusions
- Limited evidence on exercise vs. other active therapies
  - Studies indicate exercise probably has a positive effect in adults compared to usual care or passive therapies
  - Methodological limitations

***More clinical trials are needed to provide evidence base for treatment***

## Next Steps

- Initiate public comment phase through Federal Register Notice
- Finalize report and post, along with comments, on the CDC ME/CFS website
- Revisit plans for treatment guideline development

## Other Guidelines or Recommendations

- Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Diagnosis and Management in Young People: A Primer. *Front. Pediatr.*, 19 June 2017
- “Diagnosing and Treating ME/CFS” —ME/CFS Clinician Coalition, 2020
- “CFS/ME (or encephalopathy): Diagnosis and Management” —UK NICE guidelines on ME/CFS, updated version expected April 2021



# Thank You!

For more information, contact CDC  
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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