

New study adds steam to chronic fatigue syndrome controversy

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The authors of a controversial 2011 trial that showed that exercise and behavioral therapy could help treat chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) released a follow-up study that supports their original findings. But the new report comes on the heels of a lengthy and highly critical examination of the original trial by a journalist.

At issue is an \$8 million trial run in the United Kingdom, dubbed PACE, which examined a number of treatments for CFS, a disease also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) that has no known cause. In [The Lancet](#), the PACE researchers reported that patients with CFS/ME experienced “moderate improvements” in their symptoms if they did a program of graded exercise or cognitive behavior therapy. Two other interventions tested, so-called specialist medical care and adaptive pacing therapy, did not help.

The Lancet study drew immediate fire from patient groups, with some complaining that it appeared to suggest that CFS/ME is a psychological, rather than physical, disorder. Many researchers, meanwhile, argued that some of the study’s methods were seriously flawed. As *The Lancet* itself noted in an editorial [a few months after](#) publishing the 2011 study, the “response to the trial’s publication was swift and damning.”

The authors of the new PACE study added fuel to the fire, releasing an online paper in *The Lancet Psychiatry* that reports on a long-term follow-up of trial participants. It concludes that the benefits of the interventions were maintained.

Read full, original post: [Criticism mounts of a long-controversial chronic fatigue study](#)