ABSTRACT: Consumer surveys provide information on effectiveness and side effects of medical interventions in routine clinical care. A report of fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) consumers has not been carried out in Europe. The study was carried out from November 2010 to April 2011. Participants diagnosed with FMS rated the effectiveness and side effects of pharmacological and non-pharmacological FMS interventions on a 0 to 10 scale, with 10 being most efficacious (harmful). The questionnaire was distributed by the German League for people with Arthritis and Rheumatism and the German Fibromyalgia Association to their members and to all consecutive FMS patients of nine clinical centers of different levels of care. 1661 questionnaires (95% women, mean age 54 years, mean duration since FMS diagnosis 6.8 years) were analysed. The most frequently used therapies were self-management strategies, prescription pain medication and aerobic exercise. The highest average effectiveness was attributed to whole body and local warmth therapies, thermal baths, FMS education and resting. The highest average side effects were attributed to strong opioids, local cold therapy, gamma-amino-butyric acid analogues (pregabalin and gabapentin), tramadol and opioid transdermal systems. The German fibromyalgia consumer reports highlight the importance of
non-pharmacological therapies in the long-term management of FMS, and challenges the strong recommendations for drug therapies given by FMS-guidelines.