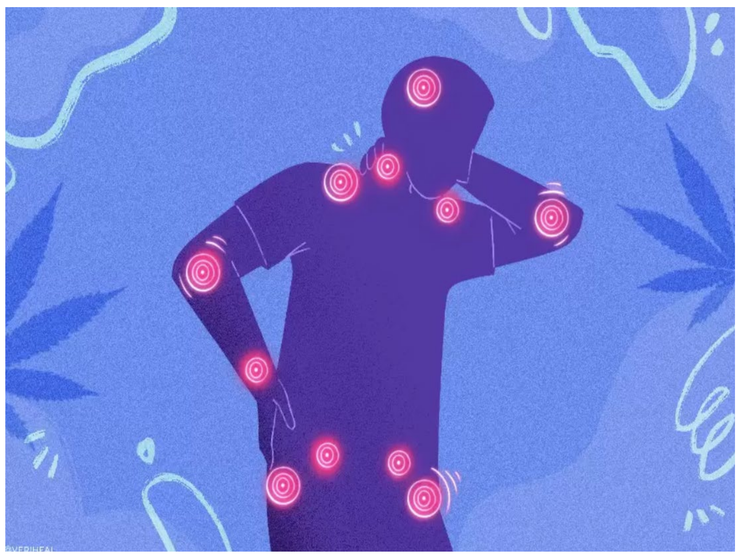

Self-reported long-term pain of unclear origin and psychosocial associations

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Background:

Many studies indicate that a central sensitisation to pain in fibromyalgia syndrome, a pain of unclear origin, could be associated with childhood maltreatment and insecure attachment [1, 2].

Methods:

A cross-sectional studies on representative samples of the adult population in the Czech Republic (n=1800, mean age 46.6, 48.7 % of men) and Slovak Republic (n=1018, mean age 46.24 years, 48.7 % men) collected data:

- questions on selected long-term diseases including pain of unclear origin
- the health status - SF-8 Health Survey [3],
- childhood maltreatment (The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, CTQ) [4, 5],
- attachment (The Experienced Close Relationship-Revised, ECR-R) [6, 7, 8] .

Results were analysed by nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test and multinomial logistic regression model, adjusted for gender and age.

Results:

Fig.1.The merged research sample

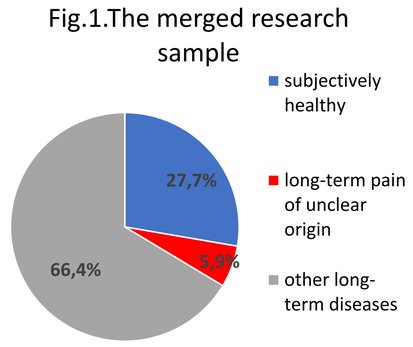
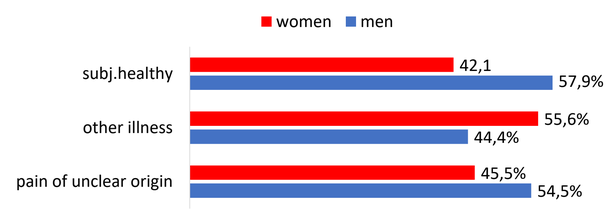
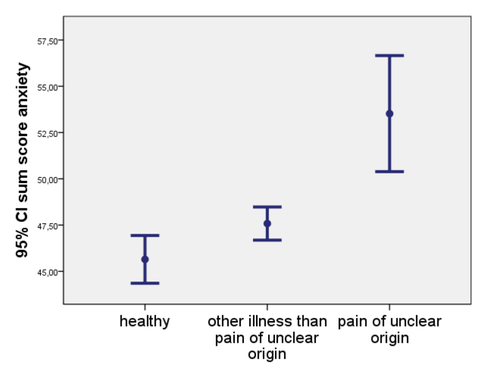


Fig.2: Participants with long-term pain of unclear origin were in 54,5 % men



From participants with long-term pain, 52 % were older than 60 years and 18.2 % were widowed.

Fig. 3 and 4: Participants with pain of unclear origin had higher attachment anxiety and avoidance compared to participants with other illness than unclear pain and than subjectively healthy (p<0.001)



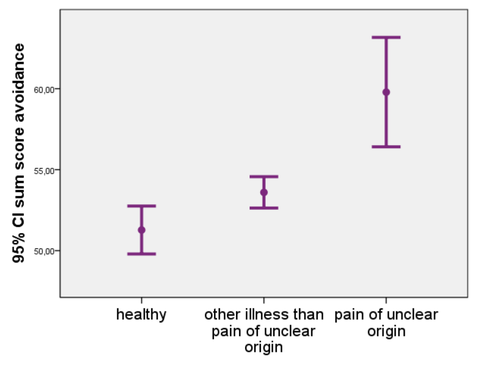
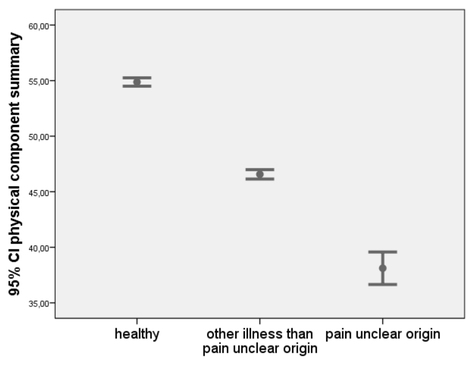
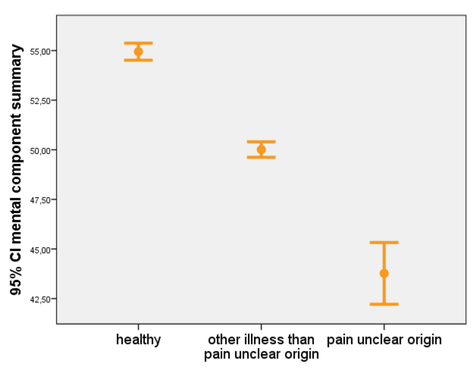
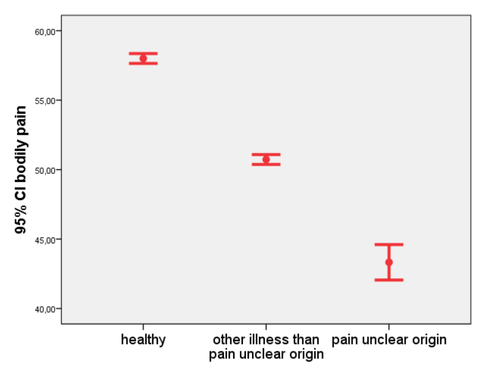


Fig. 4, 5 and 6., Tab.1: Participants with pain of unclear origin scored significantly worser (that means, they had lower scores) in all subscales of health survey compared to participants with other illness than unclear pain and than subjectively healthy (p<0.001).







SF-8 Health Survey	Pain of unclear origin M (SD)	Other illness than unclear pain M (SD)	Subj.healthy M (SD)
Physical functioning	39.6 (8.6)	46 (7.7)	52 (4.2)
Role physical	38 (8.9)	45.3 (8.2)	51.9 (4.6)
Bodily pain	43.3 (8.3)	50.7 (7.8)	58 (5.1)
General health	40.1 (6.4)	46 (7.2)	52.6 (6)
Vitality	45.5 (7.6)	51 (7.6)	56.1 (6)
Social functioning	41.2 (9.1)	47.8 (7.8)	52.9 (4.7)
Role emotional	41.3 (8)	46.2 (6.9)	50.4 (4.2)
Mental health	43.8 (9.4)	49.3 (7.7)	53.7 (5.5)
Physical component summary	38.1 (9.5)	46.6 (9.3)	54.9 (5.3)
Mental component summary	43.8 (10.1)	50 (8.6)	54.9 (6.1)

Tab.2: Emotional and physical abuse, and emotional and physical neglect were strong predictors for pain of unclear origin.

	Pain of unclear origin vs Healthy (OR, 95%CI)	Pain of unclear rigin vs Other health problems (OR, 95%CI)
Emotional abuse	5.1 (3.2-8.1)***	2.1 (1.4-3.0)***
Physical abuse	2.4 (1.4-3.9)***	1.4 (0.9-2.2) n.s.
Sexual abuse	1.5 (0.8-3.0) n.s.	1.0 (0.5-1.9) n.s.
Emotional neglect	3.0 (2-4.4)***	2.0 (1.4-2.8)***
Physical neglect	2.1 (1.5-3.1)***	1.5 (1.1-2.1)*
3 and more trauma types	2.6 (1.6-4.0)***	1.7 (1.1-2.5)*

Discussion:

Our findings are pointing out to associations between childhood maltreatment, attachment insecurity and pain of unclear origin. Even if this study has not assessed the clinical diagnosis of fibromyalgia, we assume that many of respondents reporting long-term pain of unclear origin would fulfil the clinical criteria of fibromyalgia.

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