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PHANTOM PAIN

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK
AT FIBROMYALGIA,
THE CONTROVERSIAL
NEUROLOGICAL DISORDER

THE
HEALTH &
FITNESS
ISSUE

IN FIGHTING SHAPE

BOXING CHAMP AND
WELLNESS GURU LAILA ALI
KEEPS A BALANCED
LIFESTYLE IN HER CORNER

FIT FOR FAME

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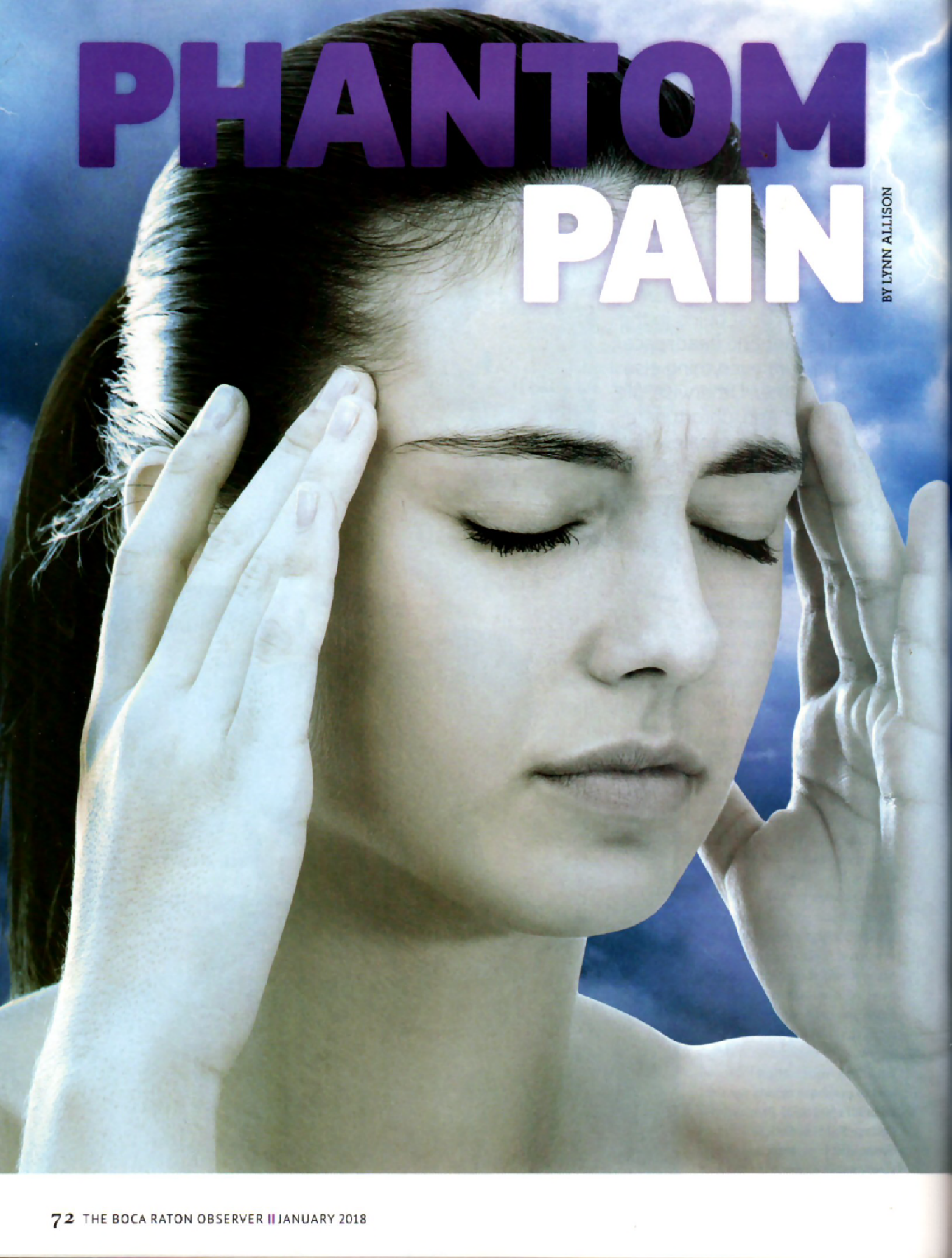
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JANUARY 2018

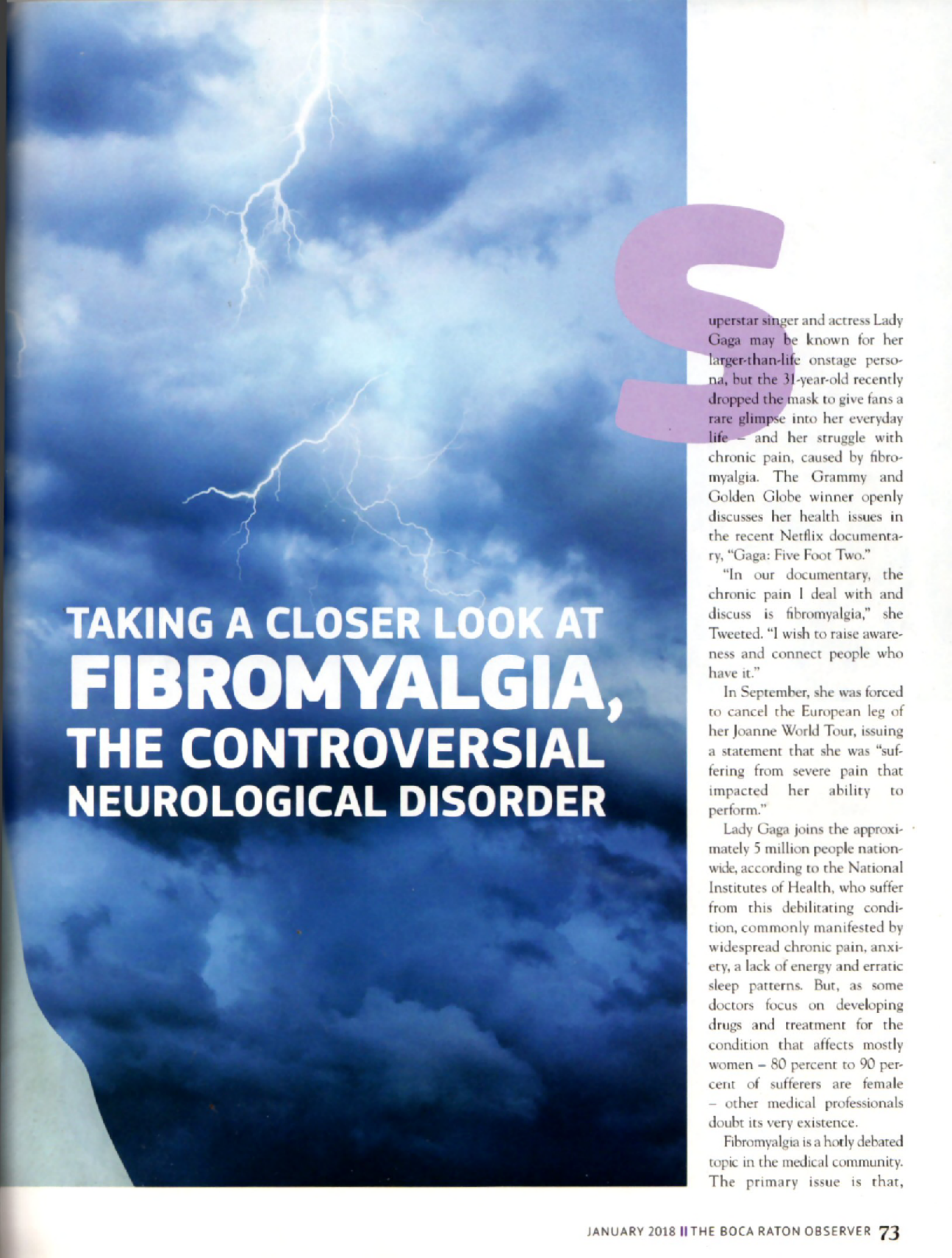


US \$3.95

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, her eyes closed and her hands pressed against her temples, conveying a sense of intense physical or emotional pain. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky with a bright light source, possibly the sun or moon, creating a high-contrast, moody atmosphere. The title 'PHANTOM PAIN' is overlaid on the top right of the image.

PHANTOM PAIN

BY LYNN ALLISON



TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT FIBROMYALGIA, THE CONTROVERSIAL NEUROLOGICAL DISORDER

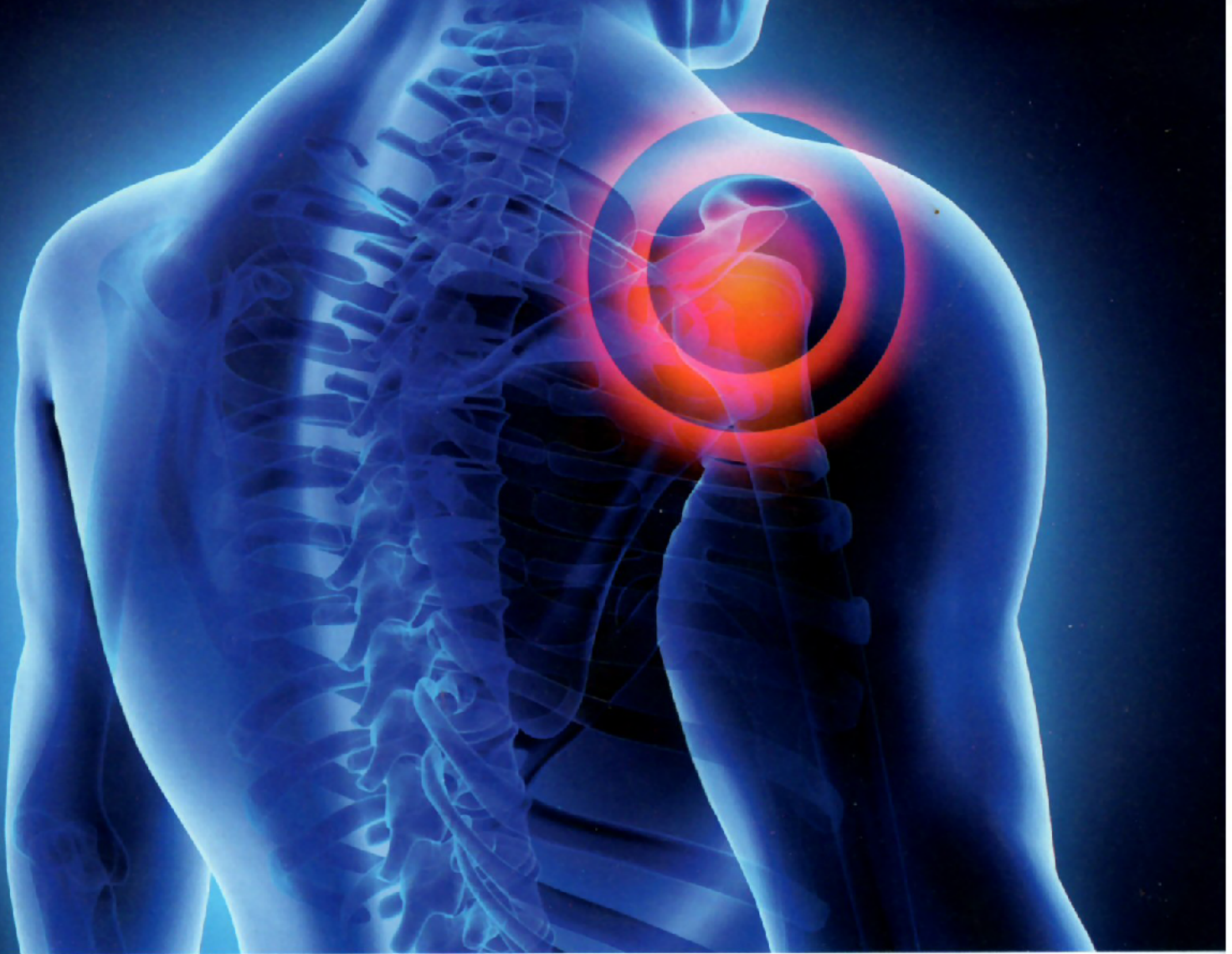
Superstar singer and actress Lady Gaga may be known for her larger-than-life onstage persona, but the 31-year-old recently dropped the mask to give fans a rare glimpse into her everyday life — and her struggle with chronic pain, caused by fibromyalgia. The Grammy and Golden Globe winner openly discusses her health issues in the recent Netflix documentary, “Gaga: Five Foot Two.”

“In our documentary, the chronic pain I deal with and discuss is fibromyalgia,” she Tweeted. “I wish to raise awareness and connect people who have it.”

In September, she was forced to cancel the European leg of her Joanne World Tour, issuing a statement that she was “suffering from severe pain that impacted her ability to perform.”

Lady Gaga joins the approximately 5 million people nationwide, according to the National Institutes of Health, who suffer from this debilitating condition, commonly manifested by widespread chronic pain, anxiety, a lack of energy and erratic sleep patterns. But, as some doctors focus on developing drugs and treatment for the condition that affects mostly women — 80 percent to 90 percent of sufferers are female — other medical professionals doubt its very existence.

Fibromyalgia is a hotly debated topic in the medical community. The primary issue is that,



although doctors recognize the chronic pain experienced by people with the condition and acknowledge that therapeutic programs are needed to provide relief, some don't believe fibromyalgia is a categorical illness. It has been suggested that the condition may be psychosomatic, existing in a patient's head. Part of the problem, say experts, is that there are no tests that definitively indicate the presence of fibromyalgia.

Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D., is one of the most frequently quoted fibromyalgia specialists in the world and is the best-selling author of "From Fatigued to Fantastic!" and "The Fatigue and Fibromyalgia Solution." Dr. Teitelbaum, also the lead author of four fibromyalgia

studies, has developed effective treatments for the disorder and explains why so many physicians ignore the symptoms.

"Fibromyalgia was initially defined in 1990 by the American College of Rheumatology and affects an estimated 2 percent to 4 percent of the population," he says. "I have developed a simple quiz [available on

vitality101.com] that can help screen people using the 2010 American College of Rheumatology criteria. The main problem with diagnosing the disorder is lack of physician awareness. This is a very complex illness, and some physicians are simply too lazy to take the time to learn about it. Because of this, they take the

approach, 'I don't know what's wrong with you, so you are crazy.' This is abusive and no longer acceptable. To put it in perspective, doctors used to call multiple sclerosis hysterical paralysis, and lupus was considered a neurosis."

Another believer in the authenticity of the disorder is Shawn Baca, M.D., president of

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— Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D., fibromyalgia specialist



the Palm Beach County Medical Society, president of the Leadership Board of the Palm Beach County Arthritis Foundation and a physician at the Rheumatology Associates of South Florida.

"It is a well-recognized disorder, and there are specific scientific criteria used for its diagnosis," he says. "It is true that, in the past, many doctors dismissed it as not a 'real diagnosis,' mostly because there was no simple test to distinguish it from many other diseases. However, as we all know, there are many other illnesses that don't have simple tests that confirm or deny a diagnosis."

Dr. Baca explains that fibromyalgia is currently considered a neurological disorder that occurs due to dysfunction in pain perception. For that reason, he discourages the use of anti-inflammatory medication to treat the condition and cautions against the use of narcotics because "they have a high risk of habituation and only a short-lived benefit," he says.

Sufferers know too well what a slippery slope the use of narcotics can become. Shirley Gilad, 54, a Boca Raton resident, discovered the danger of such drugs when she first battled fibromyalgia.

"I was diagnosed with the condition shortly after a surgical procedure eight years ago," recalls the health practitioner and owner of Integrative Hypnotherapy and the Holistic Center of Boca Raton. "I was at a yoga teacher training and had to quit because my whole body ached. I felt like I was wearing a wetsuit made of pain. Nothing seemed to help."

After trying multiple modalities, Gilad visited pain-management doctors and was prescribed opioid medications, including a morphine-based patch. She says that they provided temporary relief, followed by terrible withdrawal.

"Fibromyalgia is similar to other diagnoses, and it takes time and testing to distinguish it from other problems. Patience and persistence are needed, but even complex problems have an answer."

— Shawn Baca, M.D., president, Palm Beach County Medical Society



She weaned herself off of the meds and continued to suffer.

"The pain took over my life," she says. "I would wake up in the morning after a restless night, and even breathing became torture. I tried acupuncture, eating vegan, craniosacral and other forms of massage, but I was miserable. I spent so much energy just trying to manage the pain and hit rock bottom when I saw the toll it was taking on my mental and physical health, let alone my family."

After giving birth to twins 15 years ago, Jodi Weiner, 48, of Coral Springs, struggled with intense pain, major depression and suicidal thoughts. Doctors

thought she had postpartum depression.

"The doctors tried hormone tests, thyroid evaluations, and I was sent to a rheumatoid arthritis specialist," says the yoga teacher and executive director of Connection Coalition, which helps at-risk youth through the power of yoga. "All the tests they performed came back normal. Finally, after months of testing, the rheumatoid arthritis physician said that, through the process of elimination, I must be suffering from fibromyalgia. He said there really wasn't enough information out there to understand it."

Weiner refused to acknowledge the disorder and relied on

drugs to manage her pain.

"I couldn't pick up my babies and had to rely on narcotics, antidepressants and sleep aids to survive," she says. "I also began drinking heavily."

Luckily, a second, more knowledgeable doctor confirmed her fibromyalgia diagnosis and led her back onto the path of recovery.

"She said exactly the right things at the right time," she says. "I began cleaning up my body and cut out all animal products. In two weeks, I noticed a major improvement. I had more energy, and the doctor began to cut back my pain medication."



Jodi Weiner

After a year of physical, mental and emotional therapy, she was drug-free, could sleep better and had more energy than ever.

For Gilad, the breakthrough came four years ago when she decided to study hypnosis to add to her own varied skill set as a health care practitioner.

"I wanted to experience it as well, so I contracted the help of Keli Raymond from Pathway Hypnotherapy in Coral Springs," she says. "After about two to three months and 10 sessions, I awoke one morning and found I could breathe without flinching. I realized that, for the first time in years, I no longer had debilitating pain. I still had short episodes of pain in my wrists, but they would disappear. I have been free of fibromyalgia pain ever since, and I feel wonderful."

Raymond, who is certified in hypnotherapy, explains how

"I was diagnosed with the condition shortly after a surgical procedure eight years ago. I was at a yoga teacher training and had to quit because my whole body ached. I felt like I was wearing a wetsuit made of pain."

— Shirley Gilad

the method can help fibromyalgia patients.

"You have to know how the brain works," she says. "By rewiring the pathways in the subconscious mind that perceive pain back to their normal pattern, we can help eliminate the excruciating suffering of fibromyalgia patients."

Mariagnes Murray, 56, of Boca Raton, understands that excruciating suffering. At 34, the athlete suddenly felt "like my head was a bowling ball on top of my body," she says.

Everything ached, and, because she was in such excellent shape, she was at a loss to explain her fatigue and discomfort.

"Luckily, my sister, who was a health care executive, managed to get me into a research program at the University of Pennsylvania studying fibromyalgia," says Murray, who runs a medical practice. "I finally felt relief. Somebody was agreeing with me that something was not right and that my pain was real. I was not crazy, although many of the health care

professionals I visited made me think I must be."

During the double-blind study, Murray was in the group that received the medication Lyrica rather than the placebo. She was also placed under the care of a rheumatologist.

"For me, returning to exercise was a key element in my dealing with the condition," she says. "Sleep is critical to feeling well, so I made sure I practiced good sleep hygiene. I'm now adding cross training for balance and strength as well as yoga. I must





FINDING RELIEF

Alternative Methods To Treat Fibromyalgia

The Fibromyalgia Floatation Project (FFP) was created to test the benefits of floatation as a treatment for people suffering from the condition. Floatation is a form of reduced environmental stimulation therapy (REST) in which a patient floats effortlessly on the surface of a shallow pool of water, saturated with Epsom salt, in a lightproof and soundproof environment.

The results of the first FFP study, held in 2012 in Sweden, provided compelling evidence that floatation REST “can greatly improve the lives of people with fibromyalgia by significantly decreasing their pain, muscle tension, anxiety and stress,” says Destiny Beck, co-owner of Float8 Wellness Lounge in Deerfield Beach. “It also increased freedom of movement, energy, mood and quality of sleep.”

Delia Chiamonte, M.D., assistant professor and director of education at the Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, offers these additional tips:

- Mindfulness-based stress reduction helps stimulate the relaxation response and calm an overactive nervous system to reduce pain.
- Regular exercise can help prevent kinesiophobia (fear of movement), which often strikes patients with fibromyalgia. Lack of movement tends to increase pain.
- Tai chi and acupuncture have also been shown to reduce fibromyalgia symptoms.

admit that the fatigue associated with the discomfort still keeps me from doing all that I want to do, but, I get up, get ready and keep going. I try to discuss my discomfort with very few and push myself as far as possible. After all, there are worse afflictions! Unfortunately, the cost of Lyrica has become an obstacle, which is another factor to consider.”

follow S.H.I.N.E. are pain-free within three months. Studies show that you increase your energy by 61 percent in three weeks as well as reducing your pain.”

For those suffering with the chronic pain of fibromyalgia, he says that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

“Like high blood pressure and arthritis, fibromyalgia can



Dr. Teitelbaum explains that fibromyalgia represents an energy crisis in the body, in which a person has essentially “blown a fuse,” he says.

“Our research has shown that a comprehensive treatment, called the S.H.I.N.E. protocol, results in 91 percent of people improving with a 90 percent increase in quality of life.”

One of the primary directives of the protocol is to get at least eight hours of sleep nightly. It also calls for hormonal support, inflammation and infection treatment, nutritional support and daily exercise.

“But only exercise if you are able,” notes Dr. Teitelbaum. “After 10 weeks following the first four steps, slowly increase your exercise level without being wiped out the next day. The majority of people who

be effectively treated. Think of it like tripping a circuit breaker in your home. You can turn the circuit breaker back on, but, if you go back to doing the same things, it will go off again.”

Dr. Baca prescribes patience, he says: “Fibromyalgia is similar to other diagnoses, and it takes time and testing to distinguish it from other problems. Patience and persistence are needed, but even complex problems have an answer.”

Weiner says that she has never felt stronger or healthier in her 48 years.

“I no longer medicate and have learned healing modalities, the proper food and movement to keep fibromyalgia at bay,” she says. “Trust your own intuition, do your own research and never stop searching for a solution.”