

Chapter 5. Future Research

The following recommendations would enable researchers to generate useful data to support answers for the questions posed in this report.

- Longitudinal, interventional studies are mandatory in order to determine what baseline characteristics are associated with inability to work, and which interventions are effective in restoring the ability to work.
- Authors should report more detailed information about impairment and work status at baseline and after intervention, preferably stratified by patient characteristics.
- Future studies of employment status should clarify if employment means full or part time, prior work or new work, and also provide information on duration of return to work.
- Further research is needed to determine the impact of CBT, graded exercise, and other interventions on the issue of disability.
- The literature would be enhanced if standardized measurements of impairment were developed, defined, and used to evaluate the impact of all interventions, and if some assessment was made regarding the impact of impairment on employability in this specific patient population.
- Further research is needed to determine validity and reliability of self-reported instruments in assessment of impairment and disability in CFS patients who are often formerly high functioning individuals, unlike chronic mentally ill patients or low functioning patients with physical impairments. Validity and reliability of these instruments should be determined in patients with concurrent or prior neuropsychological diagnoses, given the high lifetime incidence of same, and particularly in patients who may have different motivations about disability determinations. Instruments should also be validated in “compensation settings.
- Further research is needed to determine whether and which validated neuropsychological non self reported assessment tools might be considered sufficient evidence to evaluate functionality as it relates do one’s ability to work.
- Further research in needed to determine whether there are characteristics of care providers or prior work experiences that relate to ongoing CFS disability.