



## **TITLE: Pharmakon, the art that heals. A prospective observational transdisciplinary study**

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### **ABSTRACT (upto 300 words)**

Fibromyalgia (FMS) is a chronic pain syndrome with many associated symptoms. frequently related to a traumatic event, strong and of short duration, or slight but protracted over time. A multidisciplinary therapeutic approach is recommended by international guidelines. The transformative experience (TE) allows for a immediate change that create novel responses to the same initial thoughts and actions, thereby breaking the maladaptive emotional/behavioral loop elicited by chronic stress.. We experimented transformative art (TA), an intrinsically transdisciplinary tool, in different ways in the three arms of the study, whose objective was the validation of efficacy (in terms of quality of life and sleep, self-esteem, self-efficacy) of transdisciplinary artistic-transformative pathways in patients with FMS. We faced FMS as a complex disease, hypothesizing its traumatic origin and deficiency of the endocannabinoid system (ECS) resulting from organic, psycho-physical, interpersonal or environmental We aimed to establish a correlation between psychological transformation and the state of organic health, based on a psychoneuroendocrineimmunological (PNEI). Our research, focused on the idea that art, used in a transformative way, can generate decisive changes, considering the sick person as the fundamental "operator" of the care work for your health. Neuroscience have shown a correlation between stress, dopaminergic system, and chronic pain. These observations reveal the role of astrocytes in the function of the dopaminergic system and which in turn are under the control of the cannabinoid system, since there are receptors of cannabinoid receptors on astrocytes. Our research shows that TA, leads to significant improvements of the psychophysical condition of FMS patients.

TA can be seen as a crucial mediator for overcoming the trauma/stressors, both on a psychological and biological level, within a PNEI perspective probably through the generation of "pivotal mental states" (PIMS), defined as a "hyper-plastic state aiding rapid and deep learning that can mediate psychological transformation" .

### **BIOGRAPHY (upto 200 words)**

**Monica Sapio-** Anesthesiologist, pain therapist; Freelance former Head of the Pain Therapy Operational Unit and currently responsible for research and treatment projects on fibromyalgia syndrome at the Buccheri La Ferla FBF Hospital, Palermo. Scientific manager of training projects in the field of pain therapy, in Sicily. Expert in the field of fibromyalgia syndrome and the use of medical cannabis in the field of pain therapy and palliative care. Medical Contact for the "Pharmakon, art that heals" project/study. Creator/host of narrative medicine workshops. Blogger/short story author since 2013.

**Claudia Villani** is a transdisciplinary cultural designer, trained in environmental and experimental art at the Palermo Academy, and in complex systems at the Santa FE Institute, New Mexico, and Istituto Enea, Rome. He is a free lance designer, in his first studio. Since 2018 he has been working on experimental study and training projects through art in the field of fibromyalgia syndrome.





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