

To Mr J Slater  
C/O [request-130828-6c0a8eab@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-130828-6c0a8eab@whatdotheyknow.com)

DWP Business Management Team  
Health & Disability Assessments (Operations)  
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22 March 2013

Dear Mr Slater,

**Freedom of Information Act - Request for Internal Review**  
**Our Reference: FOI IR 260**

Thank you for your email dated 18 March 2013 requesting a review of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) handling of your previous request, relating to Fibromyalgia - Guidelines for the Disability Analyst.

You asked:

*I'm glad that the DWP is fully aware of the guidance issued by the ICO. Sadly the same cannot be said about the previous reviewer's knowledge of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4 ed (DSM IV) and basic English comprehension.*

*The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is published by the American Psychiatric Association and provides a common language and standard criteria for the classification of mental disorders. It also lists known causes of these disorders, statistics in terms of gender, age at onset, and prognosis as well as some research concerning the optimal treatment approaches. It is interesting that in the UK NICE guidance and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) are also used but are not mentioned in the published DWP guidance.*

*The DSM IV provides the following etiology for Major Depressive Disorders: "Research has shown that depression is influenced by both biological and environmental factors. Studies show that first degree relatives of people with depression have a higher incidence of the illness, whether they are raised with this relative or not, supporting the influence of biological factors. Situational factors, if nothing else, can exacerbate a depressive disorder in significant ways. Examples of these factors would include lack of a support system, stress, illness in self or loved one, legal difficulties, financial struggles, and job problems. These factors can be cyclical in that they can worsen the symptoms and act as symptoms themselves."*

*It is interesting to note the nonappearance of fibromyalgia in the etiology above and its total absence from the DSM IV itself.*

*The statement referred to by the previous reviewer is shown below:*

*“A large number of studies have assessed the possible association between FMS and major depressive disorder [as defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental Disorders 4th ed. (DSM IV)]”*

*It is clear to anyone with a basic understanding of the English language that the use of the reference to DSM IV is solely to provide a recognised definition for “major depressive disorder”.*

*The previous reviewer’s statement that “This contains research and studies relating to different approaches ...” is incorrect as the DSM IV does not contain research and studies relating to different approaches. In fact, as stated above, fibromyalgia is totally absent from the DSM IV. One can only hope that the statement was born out of ignorance rather than an intent to deceive.*

*However, the DWP still has not provided me with or directed me to the “large number of studies (that) have assessed the possible association between FMS and major depressive disorder”. The DWP must either provide the requested data or admit that it doesn’t have the data.*

*If it does not have the requested data then it is clearly unable to substantiate the claims made in the document “fibromyalgia guidelines for the disability analyst” and people will be able to draw the only logical conclusion that the guidance is not based upon the latest research and reflects the personal bias of the author.*

As reviewing officer, I have looked again at the requests you have made (the request received on 26 September 2012 reference VTR 3886-3684, the request received on 4 November 2012 reference IR 735 and the request received on 19 February 2013 reference IR 177) and the responses you have been provided with.

In response to your request for information relating to the studies that have assessed the possible association between FMS and major depressive disorders, section 8 of the guide that you were provided with on 31/10/12 refers, clinical references are listed in section 11.

In accordance with Section 14(2) of the Freedom of Information Act, the Department is not obliged to comply with a subsequent identical or substantially similar request it has previously responded to. The letters dated 18 February 2013 and 18 March 2013 from the Business Management Team Internal Reviewing Officer (references IR735 and IR 177) refer.

I am satisfied that you have been provided with all of the information available on this topic.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

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Health & Disability Assessments (Operations)  
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## **Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act**

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)