

**Applicant feedback  
Academy of Medical Sciences Springboard**

Applicant: Elia Valentini

Panel Discussion:

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The Panel considered Dr Valentini to be a candidate of good calibre with a solid track record. The Panel agreed that the proposal focussed on an important area, however, it shared the concerns raised by the reviewers regarding the selection of controls proposed in this study. Given the apparent lack of consensus on the underlying pathology, the Panel suggested that the application would have been strengthened by including an extensive control group experiencing pain from other conditions. It was highlighted that Dr Valentini would benefit from increased institutional support, particularly with respect to protected time for research. Overall, the Panel considered Dr Valentini's application to be innovative, but due to the identified flaws, was unable to recommend this application for funding on this occasion.

Review 1:

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**The applicant:**

The applicant is well qualified in his field with a good publication record for the stage of his career.

**Research quality:**

There is nothing wrong with the approach suggested, but I consider that fibromyalgia is an extremely difficult clinical entity to study and there is no real consensus on the underlying pathophysiology. I have fears that the proposed approach may generate data that adds to the confusion on this condition, rather than improving our understanding of it. Extensive control groups experiencing pain from non-fibromyalgia conditions may be the only way to distinguish what is meaningful. I feel this project is too risky for a first independent research project.

**Research environment and support:**

There appears to be an adequately supportive environment for this work.

Review 2:

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**The applicant:**

The applicant has some very good publications and their trajectory is in an upwards direction. This project will definitely benefit their career as it will put them on the map centrally in this important field, and it will provide the necessary training and support required at this key stage. The applicant seems to have realistic aspirations and future plans.

**Research quality:**

This is a novel approach to study FM, which is much needed and a relatively neglected area despite its prevalence and impact. The quality in terms of acquisition and analysis is well detailed, appropriate and very good - this person has been well trained by very

good former mentors. This is an important area of research, timely and is innovative compared to other studies in FM at present, so it has considerable value.

**Research environment and support:**

All very good and appropriate.