

Introduction

What is FND

Functional neurological disorder (FND) is a condition where there are changes in the functioning of the nervous system (the brain and the spinal cord). This is different to a neurological condition where there is structural damage or changes in the brain or spinal cord. There is no structural damage in functional neurological disorder (FND), but this does not mean that the symptoms are not real. They just have a different cause. Functional neurological disorder (FND) symptoms – or ‘functional neurological symptoms’ - are caused by a disruption in the communication between the nerves of the brain and the body. This disruption is caused by physical and emotional stress that a person is experiencing.



One way to think of FND is like a motorway. If the nervous system is functioning normally, the motorway traffic is flowing freely, where everyone is going at a similar speed and not stopping.

In FND, it is like there are lots of traffic jams, so the traffic flows for a short while, then it all grinds to a halt, then starts again, then stops, and so on. This will cause intermittent, or irregular, signals from the brain to the body, and therefore causes functional neurological symptoms.

Types of FND

There are different types of FND symptoms. You may have one or more than one of these:

Functional (Dissociative) Seizures

Functional seizures are a common type of FND. If you have functional seizures, you may be diagnosed with non-epileptic attack disorder (NEAD), which is a different name for the same condition. Functional seizures can be challenging and may last for a long time, but they do not cause brain damage.

Functional Sensory Symptoms

Less feeling, sensory change, or pins and needles in a body part.

Functional Cognitive Symptoms

Problems with thinking, memory or concentration.

Functional Dizziness (PPPD)

PPPD is the name for dizziness in FND.

Functional Jerks and Twitches

Sudden jerking or shock-like movements.

Functional Blindness and Deafness

Problems with eyesight and/or hearing.

Functional Facial Symptoms

Spasms of the eye and lower face.

Functional Stroke

Symptoms of a stroke, like limb weakness, numbness or difficulty speaking.

Functional Movement Disorders

Movement that you can't control, such as tremor, jerks, spasms or difficulty walking.

Types of Functional Movement Disorders:

Functional Dystonia

Spasm of a body part in FND is often a clenched hand or turned in ankle.

Functional Gait Disorder

Problems walking

Functional Limb Weakness or Paralysis

Weakness of an arm or leg, or inability to move part of the body.

Functional Speech or Swallowing Symptoms

Speech, swallowing and communication difficulties.

Functional Drop Attacks

A 'drop attack' is the term for a sudden fall to the ground without a 'blackout'.

Functional Tremor

Shaking of the arm, leg, body or neck that you can't control.

Functional Tics

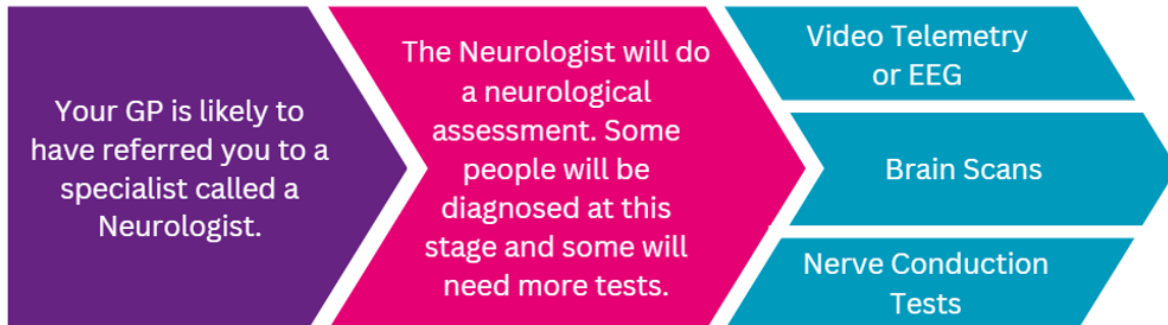
Repeating movements or noises.

Functional Facial Symptoms

Spasms of the eye and lower face.

Diagnosing FND

You may have had tests from different healthcare professionals, including a Neurologist. They follow an in-depth and scientific process to get a clear picture of what you're experiencing.





Video telemetry

This is a test that looks at the function of the brain for people during seizures. A video is also taken to capture any important events. RESULTS



EEG

An EEG records the activity in the brain.



Brain scans

Brain scans will show the functioning of the brain. They do not show structural problems.



Nerve conduction tests

This test will record a nerve moving. It can show if there are any problems with the nerve.

The results for these tests come back normal in FND. In neurological conditions they are abnormal.

FND is REAL

Feeling like people don't believe you or fighting to get the right diagnosis can actually make your symptoms worse. But, FND symptoms are real and can be treated. Healthcare professionals

will have a clearer picture of why you have these symptoms after these tests. They will be able to guide you in the next steps.

Knowledge Check

Questions

1. FND is caused by *functional* rather than *structural* problems in the brain (TRUE or FALSE)?
2. Functional seizures are a common type of FND (TRUE or FALSE)?
3. There are no tests that can diagnose FND (TRUE or FALSE)

Answers

1. FND is caused by *functional* rather than *structural* problems in the brain. TRUE or FALSE?

TRUE, this is what makes FND different to a neurological condition. There is no damage to the structure of the brain in FND.
2. Functional seizures are a common type of FND. TRUE or FALSE?

TRUE, there are many different types of FND, and functional seizures is one of the most common. Functional seizures are different to epilepsy because there is no damage to the brain causing the seizure.
3. There are no tests that can diagnose FND. TRUE or FALSE?

FALSE, there are different in-depth and scientific tests that can help diagnose FND. For example: brain scans, video telemetry and nerve conduction tests.