

1/3 of **Neurology** patients and **9%** of **inpatients** are being **treated** for functional **neurological** symptoms.

What is FND?

FND is the result of functioning problems within the central nervous system. Its symptoms are thought to derive from the brain's inability to send and receive signals properly. The brain of a patient with Functional Neurological Disorder is structurally normal but functions incorrectly.

Symptoms can cause an impairment in quality of life, that is similar to, and in some aspects worse than that experienced by patients with Parkinson's disease or MS.

Common Symptoms

FND can present with a variety of symptoms of apparent neurological origin but which current models struggle to explain psychologically or organically. Presentation may be similar to a wide range of other neurological conditions.

- Non-epileptic seizures
- Chronic pain
- Sensory changes
- Involuntary Movements
- Weakness, paralysis, and fatigue
- Bladder and bowel
- Gait and balance difficulties
- Cognitive deficits
- Sleep disturbances

The most common misconception is that patients are in control of some or all of their symptoms. The patient does not consciously produce functional symptoms.

Brain scans have helped provide evidence of functional changes in the brains of patients with functional neurological symptoms, which are distinct from feigning.

Diagnosis and Treatment

The diagnosis of FND should be made on the basis of positive features, such as the Hoovers sign and not on the absence of disease or negative test results. Currently, the most successful treatment is through a multidisciplinary approach. Retraining the brain in the form of physiotherapy and occupational therapy has proven to be the most effective. Psychological therapy can also be a helpful tool for some FND patients. While medication can alleviate some symptoms, there are currently no quick fixes for FND.

What's in a Label?

The many diagnostic terms used for the same set of functional symptoms creates confusion. This leaves many patients perplexed about their diagnosis. FND has become a common term amongst world renowned FND experts and some Neurologists who understand the complexities of functional symptoms.

FND can affect men, women, and children, though women are the most frequently diagnosed. The same level of respect and care should be given to FND patients just as any other patient with any other diagnosis. Patient rights and medical ethics do not change when the diagnosis is FND.

Interim wellbeing

Patients who visit FND Hope's healthy living page will find multiple resources on balancing life, eating well, exercise tips and joining a peer-to-peer support group. Tips patients can do now.