

Functional Neurological Disorder

a brief guide for professionals

What is Functional Neurological Disorder (FND)?

FND, previously known as conversion disorder, is a condition characterised by genuine involuntary neurological symptoms and signs in the absence of structural pathology

FND patients represent up to a third of neurology OPD visits, with a prevalence of 80–140/100 000

Symptoms include:

Fatigue
Chronic pain
Dizziness
Functional sensory symptoms affecting vision, hearing, smell, and taste

Positive Signs include:

Gait disturbances
Tremors, weakness, dystonia
Functional (non-epileptic) seizures
Sensory loss

History and examination tips

Take inventory of symptoms at each visit

Look for:

Hoover's sign
Collapsing weakness
Dystonia
Myoclonus

Key points:

FND is now a rule-in diagnosis, based on positive clinical signs

Often preceded by acute/chronic stressors or traumatic life event

Shares overlap with neurodevelopment conditions like ASD or ADHD

Management NB: Validate the patient's experience. Affirm that their condition is real, common and treatable

Build rapport with patient	Treat comorbid conditions
Psychotherapy	Physiotherapy
Occupational Therapy	Speech Therapy

References:

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2. Peeling JL, Muzio MR. Functional Neurologic Disorder. [Updated 2023 May 8]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2025 Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK551567/>
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