

What can I do to help myself?

Try to reduce stress in your life

It may help to try and identify sources of stress in your life and to talk to a professional for advice or help to manage this. By reducing stress you might find that your symptoms feel better too.

Take regular exercise

Exercise can help to strengthen muscles and make you more fit. However, don't overdo it and build up your activities gradually or you will end up more tired.

Find time to relax

Relaxation often can help you to manage your symptoms. Try to incorporate something that you enjoy doing into your daily routine. You might also find learning some relaxation techniques helpful. There are many self-help books and websites available.

Lead a healthier life

Eating healthily and cutting down on smoking and alcohol will make you feel healthier and you may find that your symptoms will improve. Try to get enough sleep and develop a regular sleep routine.

About our neuropsychiatry service

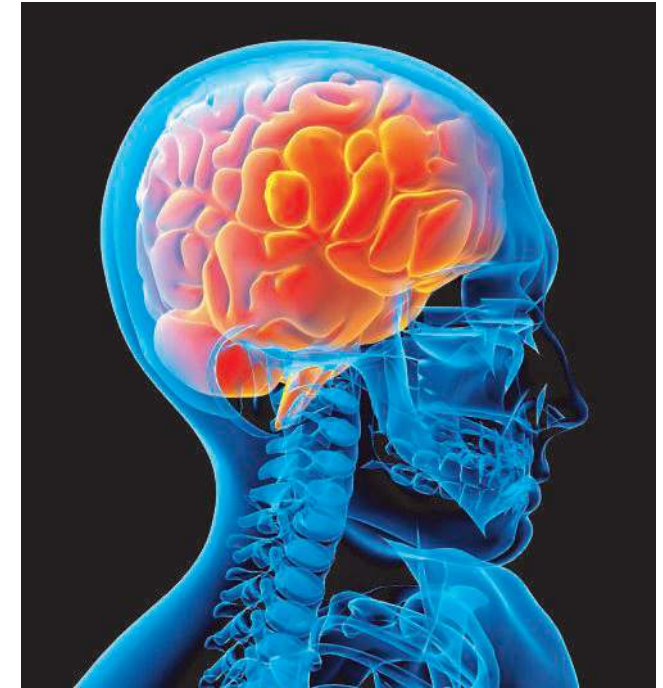
Our neuropsychiatry service is based at the Barberry, part of the National Centre for Mental Health. We offer cutting-edge care and management for the full range of neuropsychiatric disorders. We are also at the forefront of international research and teaching of neuropsychiatry. We offer outpatient and community services, alongside a two-bed video telemetry unit, and we provide a full range of neurological investigations. We contract services to a number of bodies nationally. We provide specialist mental health assessment and treatment for our service users, working alongside mainstream mental health services, social care agencies and voluntary organisations. Our care is tailored to the specific needs of the individual and the service deals with a wide range of neuropsychiatry and mental health disorders.

Postal address is:

The Barberry, 25 Vincent Drive,
Edgbaston, Birmingham
B15 2FG

Telephone number: 0121 301 2002

Ref: NEU0002A-012015



Functional neurological disorders

Patient information leaflet



What are functional neurological disorders?

A functional neurological disorder is a common condition where a person can experience difficulties with movements or sensations of any part of the body. Other symptoms include fatigue, pain, sleep problems, poor concentration, bladder and bowel complaints, speech difficulties, blurred vision, mood disturbance and non-epileptic attacks. These symptoms are not caused due to damage to the nervous system but its function is disturbed, and hence the term functional neurological disorders. As the nervous system is intact, people can get better. However people vary in how much they improve and sometimes you will be left with residual symptoms.

How is it diagnosed?

The diagnosis is made based on positive findings that your doctor will gather whilst talking to you and during physical examination. Tests such as scans and other investigations will be normal. An example of a positive finding is Hoovers sign. Here a person is unable to move the weak leg, however when the other leg is raised, power is returned to the weak leg. This indicates that your condition can potentially get better.

Think of your body as a computer. In functional disorders the 'hardware' - ie your brain and nerves - is intact. However, the 'software' - ie the messages passing through the nerves - is not functioning as it should.



Why has this happened to me?

The cause is not clear and is likely to be due to a number of factors. Sometimes the symptoms are triggered by an injury, illness or other trauma. It is likely that early experiences, stress and mental health problems can worsen your symptoms.

What are the treatment options?

Various treatment options are available including cognitive behavior therapy (CBT), physiotherapy and in some cases where there is associated depression or anxiety, drug therapy may help.

Where can I get more information?

Further information on functional disorders including symptoms, diagnosis and treatment can be accessed at the following website:

www.neurosymptoms.org