

1 **Cover Letter**

2 Thank you for considering our paper for the Journal of Psychosomatic Research

3 We describe the piloting and outcome of a new attempt to improving the pre-assessment
4 diagnosis of functional neurological disorder by questionnaire. Although we were only in
5 part successful, we think there are useful lessons here both about the nature of diagnosis in
6 FND for researchers in FND and somatic symptoms in neurological populations, as well as
7 promising leads for future studies.

8

9 We state that:

- 10 - All authors of this article had access to complete study data, are responsible for all
11 contents of the article, and had authority over manuscript preparation and the decision
12 to submit the manuscript for publication.
- 13 - All authors have approved of the submission of the manuscript to the Journal of
14 Psychosomatic Research.
- 15 - The submitted manuscript is original and the data and conclusions presented have not
16 been published or submitted in any other format.

17

18 The Edinburgh Neurosymptoms Questionnaire: Is it possible
19 to screen for a functional neurological disorder using a
20 questionnaire?
21

22 **Running head**

23 The Edinburgh Neurosymptoms Questionnaire
24

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47
48

49 Abstract

50 **Objective:** Diagnostic screening for functional neurological disorders (FNDs) continues to
51 pose a challenge. Simple symptom counts fail clearly to discriminate patients with FND but
52 there is increasing recognition of 'positive' features which are useful diagnostically during
53 face-to-face assessments. A self-completed screening questionnaire evaluating specific
54 features of FNDs would be useful for screening purposes in clinical and research settings.

55 **Methods:** The Edinburgh Neurosymptoms Questionnaire (ENS) is a 30-item survey of
56 presence and nature of: blackouts, weakness, hemisensory syndrome, memory problems,
57 tremor, pain, fatigue, globus, multiple medical problems, and operations constructed via
58 literature review and expert consensus. We conducted a pilot of the ENS on new general
59 neurology clinic attendees at a large regional neuroscience centre. Patients were grouped
60 according to consultant neurologist impression as having symptoms that were 'Not at
61 all', 'Somewhat', 'Largely' or 'Completely' due to a functional disorder. This classification
62 was compared against ????.

63 **Results:** Blackouts, weakness and memory questions provided reasonable diagnostic utility
64 (AUROC = 0.94, 0.71, 0.74 respectively) in single symptom analysis. All other symptoms
65 lacked discriminating features. A multivariate linear model with all symptoms predicted
66 functional classification with moderate diagnostic utility (AUROC = 0.83), specificity of 0.97,
67 sensitivity of 0.47. Pain and blackout scores provided the most accurate predictor of
68 functional classification.

69 **Conclusion:** The diagnosis of functional neurological disorders is difficult using unguided,
70 self-reported questions. Our results suggest some promise however for differentiation of
71 functional/dissociative blackouts from other causes, and further refinements could lead to a
72 more useful clinical screening tool for other symptoms.

73

74 **Key Words:** Functional Neurological Disorders, Symptom Count, Screening Questionnaire.

75

76 **Highlights:**

- 77 • A novel screening questionnaire for functional neurological disorders (FNDs).
- 78 • Symptom counts provide no diagnostic utility in FNDs (AUC = 0.60).
- 79 • Questions regarding positive features of FND provide modest utility (AUC = 0.83).

80 Introduction

81 Functional Neurological Disorders (FNDs) have historically been considered a common but
82 challenging diagnosis (Nicholson et al. 2011) with a considerable impact on patient quality
83 of life (Gelauff et al. 2014). Patients with symptoms without a structural cause comprise 30%
84 of general neurology outpatients (Stone, A. Carson, et al. 2009) and between 16-34% of
85 primary care attendees (Steinbrecher et al. 2011; de Waal et al. 2004; Haller et al. 2015).
86 They are commonly undiagnosed (Murray et al. 2016; Dimsdale et al. 2013; Hamilton et al.
87 2013; Leaver et al. 2016), over-investigated (Shaw & Creed 1991; Ring et al. 2005; Murray et
88 al. 2016) and report poor clinical outcomes (Gelauff et al. 2014; Stone et al. 2003; Sharpe et
89 al. 2010b).

90

91 Although challenging for a variety of reasons (Murray et al. 2016), there is a growing
92 body of literature describing the reliable diagnosis of FNDs if undertaken by clinicians
93 appropriately trained in neurological assessment (Carson et al. 2003). It is a diagnosis based
94 upon positive signs of inconsistency such as distractibility, entrainment etc. in the context of
95 particular precipitants and psychosocial factors. Recent work (Daum et al. 2014;
96 Schwingenschuh et al. 2016; Avbersek & Sisodiya 2010) has described the diagnostic value
97 of a broad range of these signs, which in a pilot sample provided specificities and
98 sensitivities of 100% and 95% respectively for a variety of functional disorders (Daum et al.
99 2015). Consultation with a neurologist, although a reliable gold-standard, is financially
100 prohibitive in large cohorts and scalable and accurate metrics of FND prevalence are lacking.

101

102 There have been several self-report questionnaire approaches to assessing somatic
103 symptoms (Zijlema et al. 2013), the Patient Health Questionnaire-15 (PHQ-15) (Kroenke et
104 al. 2002) being perhaps the most widely used, including in the validation of DSM-5 cross-
105 cutting assessments (Regier et al. 2013; Narrow et al. 2013). These scores, although not
106 initially intended for diagnostic use, have been applied (Van Ravesteijn et al. 2009; Körber et
107 al. 2011) to the prediction of somatoform disorder with generally good sensitivities and
108 specificities (78-80% and 59-71% respectively). In identifying FNDs specifically however,
109 these tools fail to discriminate structural or “organic” from functional neurological disorders

110 and perform little better than chance when tested against clinical examination by a
111 neurologist (Carson et al. 2014).

112

113 Questionnaires using specific items can be diagnostic however. Self-reported
114 features of transient loss of consciousness using an 86-item tool could predict with accuracy
115 a diagnosis of syncope, psychogenic non-epileptic seizures and epilepsy with sensitivities
116 and specificities ranging from 80-95% and 74-93% between diagnoses (Reuber et al. 2016).
117 There have so far been no attempts to construct a short, self-report questionnaire for the
118 prediction of a functional neurological disorders in general. Such a questionnaire could be
119 used to increase pre-test probabilities of a functional disorder diagnosis and assist in
120 epidemiological research. We would not expect that a questionnaire would, or should,
121 replace clinical diagnosis.

122

123 We therefore piloted a 30-item questionnaire that synthesised recognised diagnostic
124 features of the neurological history in people with FND with the aim of exploring its
125 diagnostic utility in screening for FND.

126

127 Methods

128 Patients

129 We recruited from consecutive newly referred general neurology patients who attended a
130 clinic appointment at the Department of Clinical Neurosciences, Western General Hospital,
131 Edinburgh in a 4-week period between September and October 2017. Prospective
132 participants were sent an information letter in the post with their appointment describing
133 the aims and nature of the study. All patients were approached and consented in the
134 waiting room. Patients were excluded if: they were under 16, they did not attend their
135 appointment, they had cognitive impairment or insufficient English language skills to
136 provide informed consent or completion of the survey. Ethical approval for the study was
137 granted by South East Scotland Research Ethics Committee.

139 A literature review was undertaken to identify differentiating features of history which may
140 distinguish those reporting symptoms of a functional rather than an “organic” disorder.

141 Expert consensus was used to construct a 30-item questionnaire (Appendix 1) from
142 identified predictors which could be completed in under 10 minutes. We prioritised the
143 most common symptoms presenting in outpatient neurology including: blackouts, pain,
144 cognitive deficit, weakness, tremor, pain and fatigue. Features identified from the literature
145 with evidence of diagnostic utility in these fields were:

- 146 - **Blackouts:** Lying still or shaking; Episodes in a medical setting (McGonigal et al. 2002);
147 More than two seizures lasting more than 10 minutes (Alessi et al. 2013; Plug & Reuber
148 2009; Reuber et al. 2003); Ability to hear but not respond during a blackout (Avbersek &
149 Sisodiya 2010); Pre-ictal dissociative symptoms (Stone 2006); Postictal crying/upset
150 (Alessi et al. 2013).
- 151 - **Weakness:** Dropping things frequently; Variable severity; Worsening of weakness with
152 attention (Pareés et al. 2013); Prodromal anxiety (Pareés et al. 2014; Stone, Alan Carson,
153 et al. 2009); Associated depersonalisation (Stone et al. 2012);
- 154 - **Memory Problems:** Forgetting important details of everyday life (Schmidtke &
155 Metternich 2009); Blank spells occurring during the day (Schmidtke & Metternich 2009);
156 Oneself more bothered than others;
- 157 - **Tremor:** Sudden onset (Kenney et al. 2007); Precipitating traumatic event (Pareés et al.
158 2014); Variable severity (Kenney et al. 2007); Distractibility (Roper et al. 2013).
- 159 - **Pain:** Variable location and severity (Baker & Shaw 2007).
- 160 - **Fatigue:** Worsened by activity (Baker & Shaw 2007).

161 Patients only had to complete sub-questions regarding a symptom if they had reported
162 experiencing the symptom as a “stem” question.

163

164 We also included questions about the presence of certain symptoms and features of
165 clinical history that in themselves may be predictive of a functional disorder. These included
166 hemisensory syndrome (‘Do you have numbness or altered sensation that makes you feel
167 like your body is cut in half?’) (Toth 2003), globus (Finkenbine & Miele 2004), stutter
168 (Baumgartner & Duffy 1997; Duffy 2016), multiple medical problems (McGorm et al. 2010),

169 and particular operations such as hysterectomy, appendicectomy, laparoscopy or
170 tonsillectomy (Fink 1992; Longstreth & Yao 2004). These items did not have differentiating
171 sub-questions. Demographic data including sex and age were also collected.

172

173 [Diagnosis and Rating of explanation with respect to functional disorder](#)

174 We asked neurologists to provide 1) their provisional diagnosis and 2) their assessment of
175 the extent to which the patients' symptoms were related to a functional disorder.

176 Functional neurological and somatic disorders remain a taxonomic challenge and often exist
177 in a spectrum, concomitant with structural disease. For this reason, patients were scored
178 according to a 4-point Likert scale: 'Not at All', 'Somewhat', 'Largely' and 'Completely' by
179 clinicians in response to the question: "To what extent do you think the patient's clinical
180 symptoms are explained by a functional disorder?". Definitions of functional disorders were
181 supplied to clinicians as a guide to diagnostic category (Appendix 2). A graded classification
182 like this allows for a broader evaluation of patients which may have symptoms without a
183 structural cause but not a primary functional diagnosis. Note this question was an evolution
184 of previous categorisations from our research group as 'not explained by disease' (Stone, A.
185 Carson, et al. 2009). We were keen to move away from defining disorders by the absence of
186 disease since they have their own positive diagnostic features, now recognised in DSM-5
187 criteria for Functional Neurological Symptom Disorder.

188

189 [Questionnaire Analysis](#)

190 For the purposes of analysis patients were grouped into having symptoms classed as 'Not at
191 all/Somewhat' and 'Largely/Completely' due to a functional disorder. Univariate analysis
192 was undertaken on individual questions by cross-tabulation and significance testing using
193 Fisher's Exact test. Symptom and gross ENS score were assessed using two-tailed Student's
194 T tests. Multivariate analysis was undertaken via logistic regression. We first analysed the
195 diagnostic utility of sub-questions in predicting classification of 'Largely' or 'Completely'
196 functional for reporters of a particular symptom. Linear models for each symptom were
197 used to return a score for likelihood of functional classification. Scores from these
198 symptoms were then combined in an aggregate model with symptoms and features that did
199 not have sub-questions and demographic data to provide an overall score. This method

200 introduces a significant positive bias into the second round of modelling, as symptoms with
201 sub-questions have already been weighted towards predicting a functional outcome.
202 Alternative options such as hierarchical logistic regression and stratifying patients by
203 reported symptoms were prohibited by sample size and the number of potential symptom
204 combinations. We justify this method as exploratory and speculative in the context of a pilot
205 that aims to obtain a broad picture of the potential utility of a general screening tool.
206 Questions which provided perfect or quasi-separation were excluded from multivariate
207 analysis and their contribution assessed during univariate analysis only. All analysis was
208 conducted in MATLAB[®] Release 2015b using custom written scripts.

209 Results

210 Data were gathered on 165 patients, 56 (34%) participants had data missing and were
211 excluded leaving 109 (Age = 44.6 ± 17.1 years; Female:Male Ratio = 1.53:1) responses
212 available for analysis. 104/109 (95%) of those surveyed responded having at least one of the
213 symptoms included in the questionnaire.

214

215 73/109 (67%) patients were classed as having symptoms 'Not at All/Somewhat (N/S)'
216 and 36/109 (33%) as 'Largely/Completely (L/C)' due to a functional disorder. The most
217 common diagnoses made in those classified as 'Not at All/Somewhat' were: Epilepsy 16/109
218 (15%), Migraine 11/109 (10%), peripheral neuropathy or radiculopathy 9/109 (8%),
219 headache syndromes 6/109 (6%), first seizure 6/109 (6%) and demyelinating disease 5/109
220 (5%). In those classified as 'Largely/Completely': dissociative seizures 9/109 (8%), functional
221 weakness 3/109 (3%), functional sensory changes 3/109 (3%), anxiety related symptoms
222 3/109 (3%), functional memory symptoms 1/19 (1%) and FND not otherwise specified 2/109
223 (2%) were the most common diagnoses. Female:Male ratio differed significantly between
224 groups (N/S = 1.09:1; L/C = 3.5:1; Fisher's Exact $p = 0.0098$) whilst age did not (N/S = $46 \pm$
225 17.5 ; L/C = 41.6 ± 16.2 ; two-tailed Student's T $p = 0.2$).

226

227 The 56 participants excluded from analysis due to incomplete questionnaires or
228 consultant diagnosis were marginally older than those included (47.15 ± 17.1 vs 44.6 ± 16.83
229 years; Student's t-Test $p = 0.36$) and had a greater F:M ratio (2.31:1 vs 1.53:1; Chi-square $p =$

230 0.72). 15/56 were excluded for lack of diagnosis outcome data, of those remaining 28/41
231 (68%) were classed as having symptoms 'Not at all/Somewhat' due to a functional disorder
232 and 13/41 (32%), similar proportions to those included in analysis (Chi-Square $p = 0.88$).

233

234 [Univariate Analysis: Few questions provide diagnostic utility and gross scores fail to](#)
235 [discriminate patients.](#)

236 Answers to all symptom questions and sub-questions are displayed in Table 1. Some
237 symptoms were reported significantly more frequently by those classed as
238 'Largely/Completely' functional, including: hemisensory disturbance (N/S = 8/73 (11%); L/C
239 = 11/36 (31%); $p = 0.016$), tremor (N/S = 19/73 (11%); L/C = 17/36 (31%); $p = 0.016$), pain
240 (N/S = 24/73 (33%); L/C = 22/36 (61%); $p = 0.007$), fatigue (N/S = 40/73 (55%); L/C = 28/36
241 (78%); $p = 0.022$).

242

243 5/20 symptom features were reported significantly more often by patients classed as
244 'Largely/Completely' related to a functional disorder including: having had a blackout in a
245 medical setting (N/S = 1/21 (5%); L/C = 5/9 (56%); $p = 0.005$); being able to hear others but
246 not respond during a blackout (N/S = 5/21 (24%); L/C = 8/9 (89%); $p = 0.002$); crying or being
247 upset after a blackout (N/S = 5/21 (24%); L/C = 6/9 (67%); $p = 0.042$); having blank spells
248 occurring throughout the day if also experiencing memory problems (N/S = 12/39 (31%); L/C
249 = 15/22 (68%); $p = 0.007$) and experiencing pain that is variable in severity and location (N/S
250 = 10/24 (42%); L/C = 16/22 (73%); $p = 0.042$).

251

252 Gross symptom count was significantly different between 'N/S' and 'L/C' patients
253 (N/S = 3.15 ± 2.07 ; L/C = 4.33 ± 2.27 ; 2-Tailed Student's T $p = 0.008$) (Figure 1A) but without
254 diagnostic utility (Receiver-operator characteristic area under the curve (AUC) = 0.595). Raw
255 Edinburgh Neurosymptom Score (ENS) scores, which include the addition of sub-questions
256 designed to provide a positively discriminating score, yields greater gross scores for 'L/C'
257 patients, again significantly so (N/S = 7.95 ± 5.48 ; L/C = 11.69 ± 7.27 ; 2-Tailed Student's T $p =$
258 0.003) (Figure 1B) but again without diagnostic utility (AUC = 0.602).

259

260 Multivariate sub-question analysis: Blackouts may be amenable to questionnaire
261 diagnosis, but other symptom groups lack discriminating questions.

262 Logistic regression analysis of individual “common” symptoms is described in Figure 2. Only
263 three sub questions obtained significance during multivariate analysis. Q1d: “Have you ever
264 been able to hear people but not respond to them during your blackout?” ($p = 0.047$; OR =
265 20.72 (0.88-487.97)), Q4c: “Do you have blank spells which occur during the day?” ($p =$
266 0.019; OR = 4.066 (1.23-13.45)), and Q6a: “Is your pain worse in different parts of your body
267 on different days?” ($p = 0.037$; OR = 3.73 (1.04-13.37)). Diagnostic utility (AUC) of sub-
268 questions for each symptom were: blackouts = 0.94, weakness = 0.71, memory problems =
269 0.74, tremor = 0.63, pain = 0.66 and fatigue = 0.6.

270

271 Aggregate symptom score modestly predicts functional classification.

272 Scores from symptom sub-question modelling were input into an aggregate model with
273 other symptoms, features of clinical history, sex and age. Variable coefficients for the
274 resulting model are shown in Figure 3. Only adjusted pain score ($p = 0.047$) and adjusted
275 blackout score ($p = 0.021$) achieved significance in the model, with odds ratios 26.80 (2.00-
276 359.59) and 40.15 (1.73-930.21) respectively.

277

278 Resulting aggregate scores were capable of predicting functional disorder likelihood
279 with modest utility (Figure 4) (AUC = 0.83) and “optimal” operating point, as determined by
280 minimising false positive rate, resulting in specificity and sensitivity of 0.99 and 0.47
281 respectively. Positive and negative predictive values were 0.94 and 0.79. The model
282 accounted for little of the variability in the outcome (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.23$) but performed
283 better than the constant model (Chi-squared Test vs Constant model $p < 0.001$).

284

285 Symptom ‘networks’ may aid in differentiating functional patients.

286 We also investigated whether symptom combinations or interactions may provide insight
287 into functional vs structural questionnaire responses. Inclusion of interaction terms in
288 regression analysis was prohibited by sample size therefore conditional probabilities
289 between symptom pairs were computed instead. Of the 110 possible bidirectional symptom

290 pairings, patients classed as ‘Largely/Completely’ functional were more likely to report one
291 symptom after reporting another when compared to those classed as ‘Not at All/Somewhat’
292 in 76/110 pairings. Figure 5 exhibits how fatigue plays a central role in these interactions,
293 being reported by more than 80% of those also reporting: stutter, memory problems, pain,
294 weakness, blackouts, globus, altered sensation, tremor and multiple medical problems. Only
295 one symptom pair (P(Memory problems | Multiple medical problems)) reaches this
296 threshold in those with symptoms not explained by a functional disorder and none do so
297 when paired with fatigue.

298 Discussion

299 This is the first reported pilot of a general screening questionnaire to improve the pre-test
300 probability of a diagnosis functional neurological disorders. We find that gross number of
301 symptoms, in the subset we investigate here, failed to distinguish cases from controls.
302 Addition of items in our novel questionnaire about features reportedly specific to functional
303 disorders also commonly failed to distinguish patient groups in our sample. We found some
304 exceptions, where patients classified as having functional symptoms more commonly
305 reported features of: Blackouts (having had a blackout in a medical setting, being able to
306 hear people but not respond during a blackout, being upset following an episode); Memory
307 problems (having associated blank spells during the day); Pain (reporting variability in bodily
308 location and severity.

309

310 Symptoms scores weighted according to these features in an aggregate model show
311 good specificity (0.99) but poor sensitivity (0.47) when compared to consultant neurologist
312 impression as measured on a 4-point Likert scale. Resulting positive and negative predictive
313 values (0.94 and 0.79 respectively) were however, promising, and had greater utility as a
314 pre-screening diagnostic tool for FND than measures based on symptom counts such as
315 PHQ-15 (Carson et al. 2014; Van Ravesteijn et al. 2009). Although effective for excluding
316 those deemed to have symptoms of an “organic” cause, our linear score failed to reliably
317 identify patients with FND from a general neurology outpatient population. Our speculative
318 assessment of symptom interactions suggests that non-linear methods that take account of
319 multivariate higher order interactions may prove a more valuable approach.

320

321 Eliciting self-reported positive features of functional disorders is challenging.

322 Although many discriminating features of history have been described in the literature and
323 anecdotally, our data show that these are difficult to translate into specific and sensitive
324 questions for patients to answer in an unguided way. The corollary being that although our
325 understanding of the semiology and history of functional symptoms has improved, the
326 ability to extract that from patients in a meaningful way is still the remit of an experienced
327 diagnostic interview and physical examination.

328

329 Capturing the recognised linguistic features of FND descriptions is a core problem in
330 constructing a viable self-reported screening questionnaire. There is now a significant body
331 of work highlighting these discriminating features: Poor formulation effort (Schwabe et al.
332 2008), inconsistent metaphorical conceptualisation (Plug et al. 2009), and vague seizure
333 experience descriptions in psychogenic non-epileptic seizures; preserved working memory,
334 the ability to process compound questions and good recollection of personal information in
335 functional memory disorders (Jones et al. 2016); post-exertional malaise in fatigue (Keech et
336 al. 2015). However, those studies were all done on the basis of interactive conversation
337 analysis. Self-report tools implicitly rely on a particular symptom being amenable to self-
338 recognition. Transposing clinical observations into questions capable of eliciting
339 introspection and 'accurate' response is a clear limitation to such an enquiry. It may be that
340 questionnaire items need to be refined or that questionnaires are, themselves, too crude a
341 tool.

342

343 Perhaps a surprising finding in this population is that questions regarding functional
344 symptoms such as globus and stutter show poor diagnostic utility in both univariate and
345 multivariate analysis. Although globus and adult onset stutter are generally considered to
346 relate to a functional disorder they were reported with similar frequency in both functional
347 and non-functional groups, albeit in small numbers. There were also interesting responses
348 in those with symptoms unexplained by a functional disorder to questions that are
349 commonly associated with functional disorders. For example, 8 out of 73 patients reported
350 that they had numbness or altered sensation that made them feel 'like your body is cut in

351 half' (Toth 2003) and 5 out of 21 patients reported tearfulness after blackouts (Avbersek &
352 Sisodiya 2010). Questions about movement disorders also indicated the difficulty of using
353 questionnaires to elicit a history. All 19 patients who reported an abnormal movement such
354 as tremor in the structural group said it came on suddenly. But what a neurologist
355 understands as sudden, e.g. not there at 10.58am and present at 11.00am – may not be the
356 same as how a patient understands that word – e.g. I didn't have it last year and suddenly
357 this year I do. It was also surprising how many movement disorder patients said that their
358 movements could go away for hours or days (16/19).

359

360 [The importance of diagnostic tools and more effective diagnostic procedures in FNDs](#)

361 A standardised and easily administrable tool for the screening of functional disorders has
362 the potential to enhance clinicians' pre-test probability for making a diagnosis of functional
363 disorder and, as a consequence of earlier intervention, reduce iatrogenic harm. A shorter
364 duration of symptoms prior to diagnosis often predicts a favourable prognosis in FNDs
365 (Gelauff et al. 2014; Sharpe et al. 2010a). Early identification of patients with likely
366 functional symptoms could also assist in quantifying their prevalence and demographics at
367 an epidemiological scale. So far this has been unattainable with the present non-specific
368 tools and the expense of definitive clinical diagnosis.

369

370 [Limitations](#)

371 This was a pilot study of a new approach to FND diagnosis, with a relatively small sample
372 size. Our reported predictive values are dependent on prevalence calculated on a relatively
373 small population which, for certain symptoms, failed to meet the generally accepted rule of
374 5-10 participants per predictor variable (Kupper & Hafner 1989). The large variances
375 observed during linear modelling may be a reflection of this, or a reflection of the variable
376 nature of functional disorders. There is a risk that some patients were classified in to the
377 wrong diagnostic group by the neurologists seeing them, although a similar study found a
378 very low rate of misdiagnosis at 18 months follow up (Stone, A. Carson, et al. 2009). We also
379 don't know whether, even if the neurologist rated the main diagnosis as "organic", the
380 symptom the patient gave their responses about would have received the same rating. We
381 are also cautious to highlight the limitations of the present two-stage modelling. Ideally,

382 sub-question coefficients should be computed on a separate population from the overall
383 aggregate score to prevent a significant bias in favour of symptoms with sub-questions in
384 the final model.

385

386 Our final model is biased to a degree by case deletion of those with incomplete
387 questionnaires. 109 individuals were included in the final analysis, with 56 (34%) of the 165
388 participants excluded. Given this significant proportion we sought to establish whether their
389 inclusion in analysis might mitigate some of the bias case deletion introduces. Given that we
390 first model symptom sub-questions on a subset of those reporting that symptom, we sought
391 to include every participant who had at least answered a single symptom's sub-questions
392 completely in the first stage of modelling. Using symptom scores derived from this more
393 inclusive criterion, we then reran the aggregate model with the 109 respondents who had
394 complete questionnaires. Resulting sub-question coefficients were similar with Q1d: "Have
395 you ever been able to hear people but not respond to them during your blackout?" and
396 Q4c: "Do you have blank spells which occur during the day?" remaining significant with p
397 values in the new model 0.039 and 0.006 respectively. And Q6a: "Is your pain worse in
398 different parts of your body on different days?" becoming less significant ($p = 0.052$). In the
399 final aggregate model, blackout scores become insignificant ($OR = 7.97 (0.57-111.68)$) but
400 pain scores remain predictive ($OR = 21.87 (1.34-358.05)$). Aggregate scores however retain
401 similar discriminate utility ($AUC = 0.80$) and sensitivity of 0.64 and specificity of 0.84 at the
402 'optimal' operating point.

403

404 We also found that many of our questions, or question wordings, although
405 constructed to elicit positive answers in those experiencing functional symptoms, failed to
406 do so on many occasions. Only blackouts, memory problems and pain domains had sub-
407 questions answered significantly more often by patients deemed 'Largely/Completely'
408 functional. The heterogeneity of both FND and neurological pathology in general may be the
409 limiting factor to such a broad goal. It is clear that if the present tool is to be developed, and
410 sensitivities greater than 0.47 are to be achieved, question wording and inclusion needs to
411 be adjusted considerably.

412

413 Readers may also wonder why we didn't study the performance of the relevant
414 subsections of the questionnaire for diagnostic categories (e.g. functional gait disorder, non-
415 epileptic seizures). This was firstly because the numbers involved would have been too small
416 and secondly because patients with functional neurological disorders often have mixed
417 symptoms which are not always picked up on diagnostically by neurologists.
418

419 Conclusions

420 Despite limitations, this pilot version of an ENS questionnaire was, in its complete form,
421 surprisingly capable of reliably excluding patients diagnosed by neurologists as *not* having a
422 functional disorder. It was capable of including a significant number of functional patients,
423 particularly those that report blackouts, memory problems and pain. The use of specific
424 positive features of functional disorder in an aggregate model rather than linear summation
425 of symptom counts has shown promising utility. Future work could aim to investigate more
426 systematically how those who experience functional symptoms, outside the domain of
427 blackouts, report their disorder and therefore how to improve the questions or wording in
428 later versions of this questionnaire.

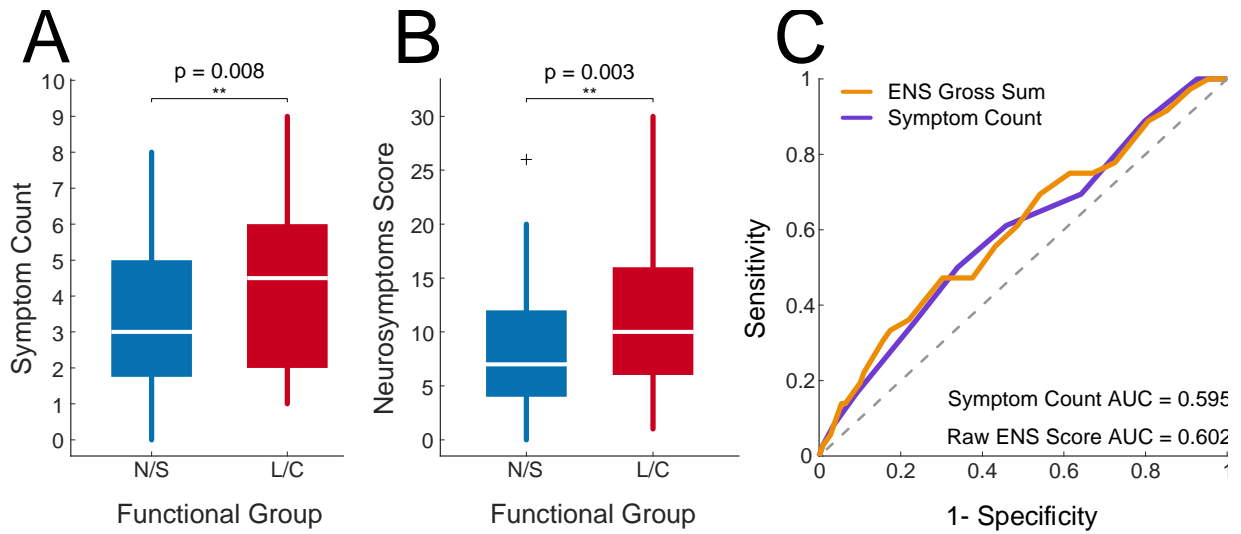
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The Edinburgh Neurosymptoms Questionnaire

	N	Symptoms explained by a functional disorder:		p-value
		Not at All/Somewhat	Largely/Completely	
Sex	73/109 (67%)	36/109 (33%)		0.01**
Age (Mean ± SD)	F:M = 1.09:1	F:M = 3.5:1		0.200
Symptom Count (Mean ± SD)	46 ± 17.5	41.6 ± 16.2		0.008**
Gross ENS Score (Mean ± SD)	3.15 ± 2.07	4.33 ± 2.27		0.003**
Q1: During the last 6 months have you been bothered by blackouts?	7.95 ± 5.48	11.69 ± 7.27		0.830
Q1a: During your blackouts do you get told you lie still or shake?	21/73 (29%)	9/36 (25%)		0.673
	Lie Still: 5/21 (24%) Shake: 13/21 (62%) Unsure: 3/21 (14%)	Lie Still: 3/9 (33%) Shake: 4/9 (44%) Unsure: 2/9 (22%)		0.673
Q1b: Have you ever had a blackout in a medical setting e.g. visiting the hospital/GP/another doctor?	1/21 (5%)	5/9 (56%)		0.005**
Q1c: Have you had more than two seizures during which you shook without stopping for more than 10 minutes? (This does not include the time taken for you to come round after the seizure had finished)	2/21 (10%)	2/9 (22%)		0.563
Q1d: Have you ever been able to hear people but could not respond to them during your blackout?	5/21 (24%)	8/9 (89%)		0.002**
Q1e: Do you ever have moments before your blackouts of losing track of what is going on, of "blinking out" or "spacing out" or in some way feeling that you are not part of what is going on?	13/21 (62%)	9/9 (100%)		0.067
Q1f: Are you told that after an attack you cry or are upset?	5/21 (24%)	6/9 (67%)		0.042*
Q2: During the last six months have you been bothered by weakness in one or more limb e.g. arm(s) or leg(s)?	30/73 (41%)	20/36 (56%)		0.220
Q2a: Do you drop things frequently?	13/30 (43%)	13/20 (65%)		0.159
Q2b: Does your limb weakness get worse or better at different times of the day?	14/30 (47%)	10/20 (50%)		1.000
Q2c: Does concentrating on trying to move make the limb weakness worse?	6/30 (20%)	9/20 (45%)		0.114
Q2d: At the start of your limb weakness did you feel your heart pounding or did you feel frightened, anxious or very uneasy?	9/30 (30%)	10/20 (50%)		0.235
Q2e: Does your weak limb feel like it does not fully belong to you?	13/30 (43%)	11/20 (55%)		0.565
Q3: Do you have numbness or altered sensation that makes you feel like your body is cut in half?	8/73 (11%)	11/36 (31%)		0.016*
Q4: During the last six months have you been bothered by memory problems?	39/73 (53%)	22/36 (61%)		0.540
Q4a: Who is most bothered by your memory problems, you or your partner/family/friends?	Family: 3/39 (8%) Me: 32/39 (82%) Unsure: 4/39 (10%)	Family: 4/22 (18%) Me: 16/22 (73%) Unsure: 2/22 (9%)		0.467
Q4b: Are you bothered by forgetting important details such as the name of a family member or your PIN number?	17/39 (44%)	14/22 (64%)		0.184
Q4c: Do you have blank spells which occur during the day?	12/39 (31%)	15/22 (68%)		0.007**
Q5: During the last six months have you been bothered by tremor or an abnormal movement in one or more limb e.g. arm (s) or leg(s)?	19/73 (26%)	17/36 (47%)		0.032*
Q5a: Did your tremor or abnormal movement come on suddenly?	19/19 (100%)	15/17 (88%)		0.216
Q5b: Did your tremor or abnormal movement come on after an injury or accident?	2/19 (11%)	3/17 (18%)		0.650
Q5c: Can your tremor or abnormal movement go away completely for hours to days only to return again?	16/19 (84%)	16/17 (94%)		0.605
Q5d: Does your tremor or abnormal movement ever stop when you are distracted or concentrating on something else?	3/19 (16%)	5/17 (29%)		0.434
Q6: During the last three months have you had pain almost every day in more than one part of your body?	24/73 (33%)	22/36 (61%)		0.007**
Q6a: Is your pain worst in different parts of your body on different days?	10/24 (42%)	16/22 (73%)		0.042*
Q7: Have you been lacking energy every day or almost every day for the last six months?	40/73 (55%)	28/36 (78%)		0.022*
Q7a: Does activity make your fatigue worse?	25/40 (63%)	23/28 (82%)		0.107
Q8: In the last five years have you had to see doctors in the hospital for different problems more than four times? (E.g. problems with your heart, your joints, your brain and gut)	27/73 (37%)	16/36 (44%)		0.533
Q9: Do you get a feeling that there is a lump in your throat or something stuck when you are trying to eat or drink?	18/73 (25%)	8/36 (22%)		1.000
Q10: Do you have a stutter which started after you were more than 16 years old?	4/73 (5%)	3/36 (8%)		0.682
Q11: Have you needed any operations?	40/73 (55%)	16/36 (44%)		0.415

435 Figure 1



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437 **Figure 1: Comparison of gross scores. A** - Boxplot of symptom counts separated by
438 functional classification. Symptom counts are significantly greater in patients with functional
439 disorder. **B** - Boxplot of gross scores for full 30-point ENS questionnaire. The addition of
440 discriminating sub-questions yields greater scores for 'Largely/Completely' explained by
441 functional disorder. **C** - ROC curve of symptom count and gross sum. Symptom count and
442 raw ENS scores fail to provide diagnostic utility (N/S = Not at All/Somewhat; L/C =
443 Largely/Completely explained by a functional disorder).

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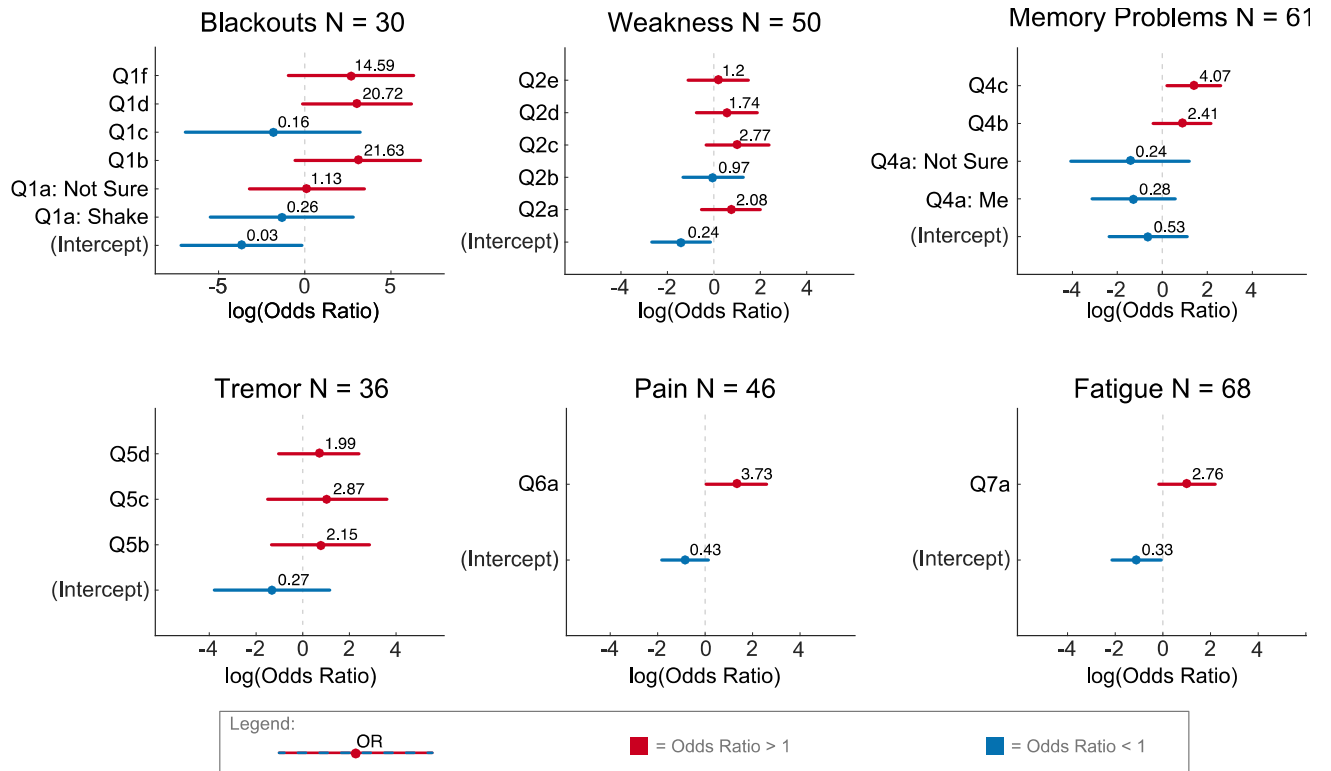
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454 Figure 2



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456 **Figure 2: Results of multivariate sub-question analysis.** Sub-questions were input as
 457 predictor variables and the resulting coefficients, confidence intervals and odds ratios are
 458 displayed above. Only Q1d, Q4c and Q6a achieve significance in their respective models.
 459 Most sub-questions provide, as expected, a positive predictive value for functional
 460 classification, but only 3 did so with odds ratios significantly greater than 1.

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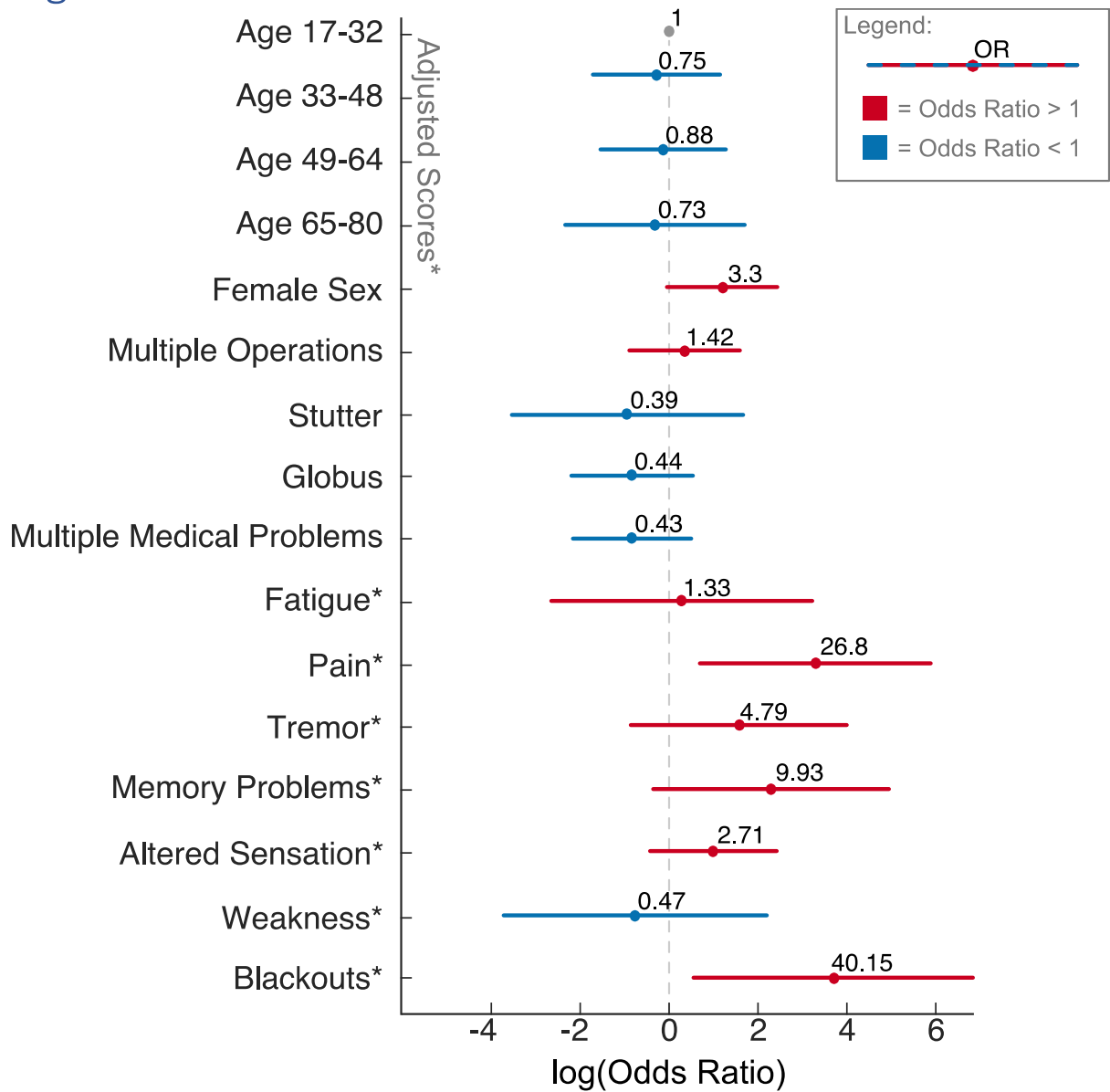
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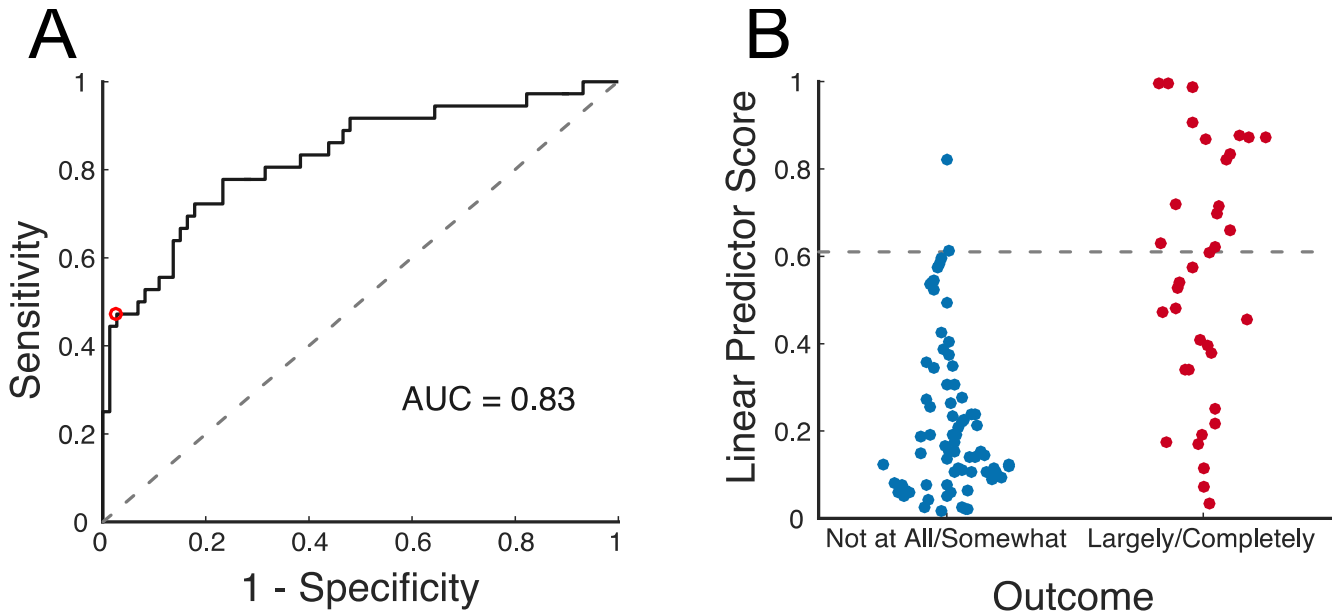
466 Figure 3



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468 **Figure 3: Aggregate score coefficients.** Forest plot showing linear coefficients and
 469 confidence intervals for each variable in the aggregate model. “Common” symptoms have
 470 been replaced by the linear predictor scores from sub-question modelling. Odds ratios are
 471 displayed for each coefficient above the bar. Adjusted scores for pain and blackouts achieve
 472 significance and drastically increase the odds of correct classification.

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476 **Figure 4: Diagnostic utility of the ENS questionnaire.** A - ROC curve of aggregate linear
477 model scores predicting consultant classification of patients with symptoms 'Not at
478 All/Somewhat' or 'Largely/Completely' functional. The optimal operating point is displayed
479 as a red circle on the curve. Predictor scores were capable of achieving an AUC of 0.83. B -
480 Scatter plot of aggregate model scores separated by functional classification. The
481 corresponding optimal score identified in ROC analysis is displayed as a grey dotted line. The
482 model is capable of excluding non-functional patients effectively, but many functional
483 patients are missed with the 'optimal' threshold.

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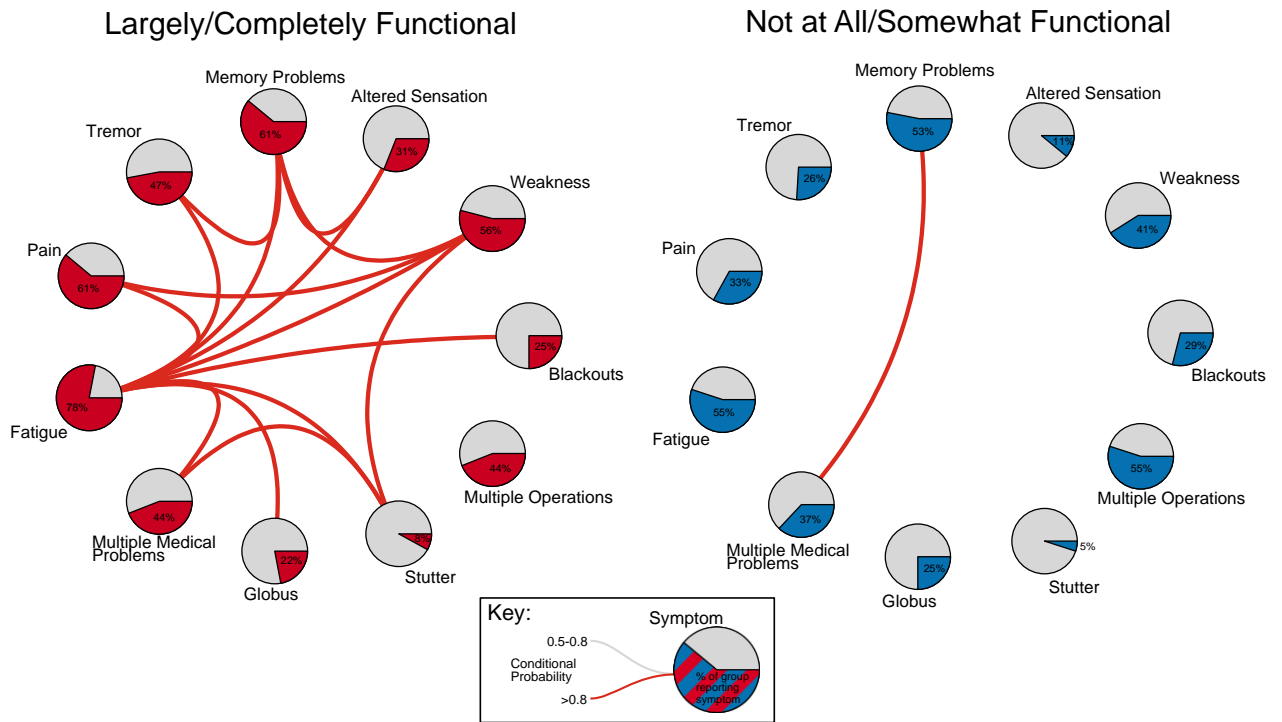
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497 **Figure 5: Symptom interactions.** Paired conditional probabilities of symptoms occurring if
 498 another symptom is reported. Red lines indicate a symptom pair in which there is a more
 499 than 80% likelihood of a co-occurrence. Grey lines indicate co-occurrence > 0.5 and are
 500 weighted linearly between 0.5-0.8. Patients with functional disorders reported symptom
 501 networks that are far more connected than structural patients. Fatigue plays a central role
 502 in the visible differences. (Red: Functional class = 'Largely/Completely'; Blue: Functional
 503 class = 'Not at All/Somewhat').

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735 [Appendix 1](#)

736 Edinburgh Neurosymptoms Questionnaire (Attached by email)

737 [Appendix 2](#)

738 Consultant diagnostic/classification guidance (Attached by email)

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