FND Symposium

RANZCP SoN Neuropsychiatry Conference

12 November 2026 · Gold Coast

GLOBAL NEUROPSYCHIATRY GROUP

1 NEUROIMAGING: FROM GROUP FINDINGS TO INDIVIDUAL PREDICTION

Keynote: Christiana Westlin, MGH/Harvard

> Imaging supports a network model of FND that helps explain it to patients, but it cannot yet predict an individual's course or treatment response. Machine-learning classifiers reach 68–80% accuracy within a site but only about 60% against psychiatric controls.

#	REFERENCE	LINK
1	Westlin C, Guthrie AJ, et al. Machine learning classification of functional neurological disorder using structural brain MRI features. *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry*. 2025;96(3):249–257.	doi:10.1136/jnnp-2024-333499
2	Wegrzyk J, et al. Identifying motor functional neurological disorder using resting-state functional connectivity. *NeuroImage Clin*. 2018;17:163–168.	doi:10.1016/j.nicl.2017.10.012
3	Weber S, et al. Multi-centre classification of functional neurological disorders based on resting-state functional connectivity. *NeuroImage Clin*. 2022;35:103090.	doi:10.1016/j.nicl.2022.103090
4	Waugh RE, Parker JA, Hallett M, Horovitz SG. Classification of functional movement disorders with resting-state functional magnetic resonance imaging. *Brain Connect*. 2023;13(1):4–14.	PMC9942186

2 FND AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

Alex Lehn, FND Australia

> FND is broadly stable through pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period, and most women can care well for their babies. Falling oestrogen (premenstrual phase, menstruation, menopause) consistently worsens symptoms.

#	REFERENCE	LINK
5	Cabreira V, et al. Functional neurological disorder in pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period: systematic review. *BJPsych Bull*. 2024.	doi:10.1192/bjb.2024.70
6	Lehn A, Hoeritzauer I, McLoughlin C, et al. The impact of pregnancy on functional neurological disorder (FND). *Eur J Neurol*. 2025;32(11):e70413.	doi:10.1111/ene.70413
7	van Rhijn S, et al. Clinical presentations and treatment experiences of functional neurological disorder in the perinatal period. *J Neuropsychiatry Clin Neurosci*. 2026.	doi:10.1176/appi.neuropsych.20250261
8	Palmer DDG, Warren N, Morton A, Lehn A. From menarche to menopause: hormonal influences on functional neurological disorder. medRxiv 2026.	doi:10.64898/2026.07.16.26358260
9	von der Weid L, et al. The impact of hormonal changes on functional neurological disorder: an international online survey. medRxiv 2026.	doi:10.64898/2026.08.17.26360584
10	Everyday Health. Understanding your menstrual cycle.	everydayhealth.com

3 FUNCTIONAL SEIZURES: CLINICIAN AND LIVED-EXPERIENCE PERSPECTIVES

Tobias Winton-Brown

> Believe, validate and give a clear positive diagnosis. Treatment works, treated patients are more than three times as likely to recover, and function matters as much as seizure count.

#	REFERENCE	LINK
11	Litton CE. A clinician's perspective in the management of functional seizures. *Epilepsy Behav Rep*. 2021;16:100492.	doi:10.1016/j.ebr.2021.100492
12	Higson L, Chen Z, Rayner G, et al. Internet intervention for functional seizures: a randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Neurol*. 2026.	doi:10.1001/jamaneurol.2026.3893
13	Higson L. *The Seizure Turnaround* (podcast).	Apple Podcasts

4 METACOGNITION AND FUNCTIONAL COGNITIVE DISORDER

Adith Mohan

> In functional cognitive disorder, in-the-moment accuracy is preserved but global belief about memory is poor, effortful and resistant to updating, acting as a sticky prior in predictive-processing terms.

#	REFERENCE	LINK
14	Fleming SM, Daw ND. Self-evaluation of decision-making: a general Bayesian framework for metacognitive computation. *Psychol Rev*. 2017;124(1):91–114.	doi:10.1037/rev0000045
15	Rouault M, Dayan P, Fleming SM. Forming global estimates of self-performance from local confidence. *Nat Commun*. 2019;10:1141.	doi:10.1038/s41467-019-09075-3

5 LIVED EXPERIENCE OF FND

> A diagnosis without explanation or a pathway frightens. Validation, a specialist multidisciplinary programme and grief work changed the course.

#	RESOURCE	LINK
—	FND Revolution TV (YouTube channel): lived-experience and carer perspectives on FND.	youtube.com/@FNDRevolution

6 CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS: THE STRESS-SYSTEM MODEL

Kasia Kozlowska

> FND is a stress system stuck in defensive mode; every discipline aims to lower arousal and give the brain signals of safety. Keep the child mobilising and at school, treat comorbidity, and use a stepwise seizure plan.

#	REFERENCE	LINK
16	Gianaros PJ, Wager TD. Brain-body pathways linking psychological stress and physical health. *Curr Dir Psychol Sci*. 2015;24(4):313–321.	doi:10.1177/0963721415581476
17	Savage B, Chudleigh C, Hawkes C, Scher S, Kozlowska K. *Treatment of Functional Seizures in Children and Adolescents: A Mind-Body Manual for Health Professionals*. Australian Academic Press; 2022 (open access).	Download page
18	Cummins R, Hawkes C, Longworth J, Scher S, Kozlowska K. The adjunct role of pharmacotherapy in multimodal treatment of paediatric functional neurological disorder. *Front Psychiatry*. 2025;16:1560873.	doi:10.3389/fpsyt.2025.1560873

7 PSILOCYBIN WITH PHYSIOTHERAPY FOR TREATMENT-RESISTANT MOTOR FND

Prof Richard Kanaan, Austin Health / University of Melbourne

> A 15 mg psilocybin dose given during physiotherapy produced rapid, marked improvement, with reduced limbic–motor connectivity tracking recovery. This remains experimental; an RCT of 15 mg vs 1 mg active placebo is now recruiting.

#	REFERENCE	LINK
19	Aybek S, Nicholson TR, O'Daly O, et al. Emotion-motion interactions in conversion disorder: an fMRI study. *PLoS One*. 2015;10(4):e0123273.	doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0123273
20	Aybek S, Nicholson TR, Zelaya F, et al. Neural correlates of recall of life events in conversion disorder. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2014;71(1):52–60.	doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2013.2842
21	Edwards MJ, Adams RA, Brown H, Pareés I, Friston KJ. A Bayesian account of 'hysteria'. *Brain*. 2012;135(11):3495–3512.	doi:10.1093/brain/aws129
22	Bryson A, Carter O, Norman T, Kanaan R. 5-HT2A agonists: a novel therapy for functional neurological disorders? *Int J Neuropsychopharmacol*. 2017;20(5):422–427.	doi:10.1093/ijnp/pyx011
23	Butler M, Seynaeve M, Nicholson TR, et al. Psychedelic treatment of functional neurological disorder: a systematic review. *Ther Adv Psychopharmacol*. 2020;10:2045125320912125.	doi:10.1177/2045125320912125
24	Bhagavan C, Bryson A, et al. Psilocybin-assisted physiotherapy for refractory motor functional neurological disorder: protocol for a randomised dose-comparison pilot study. *Acta Neuropsychiatr*. 2026;38:e3.	doi:10.1017/neu.2025.10042

8 FND IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Nicole Sing, RBWH emergency physician

> Every ED visit is a chance to interrupt revolving-door care. Patients average 3.5 ED visits and are four times likelier to re-present than to be referred to psychology.

#	REFERENCE	LINK
25	Metro North Health. F44 emergency presentations by facility, HEI Clinical Intelligence data extract, 17/12/2024 (internal data, not published).	—

9 SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IN FUNCTIONAL SEIZURES

Tina Salama · systematic review and meta-analysis, 19 studies

> About 1 in 6 people with functional seizures have a substance use disorder (pooled prevalence 15.9%); screen everyone.

#	REFERENCE	LINK
26	Benbadis SR, Hauser WA. An estimate of the prevalence of psychogenic non-epileptic seizures. *Seizure*. 2000;9(4):280–281.	doi:10.1053/seiz.2000.0409
27	Diprose W, Sundram F, Menkes DB. Psychiatric comorbidity in psychogenic nonepileptic seizures compared with epilepsy. *Epilepsy Behav*. 2016;56:123–130.	doi:10.1016/j.yebeh.2015.12.037

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