

Is physiotherapy helpful in functional motor disorders?

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Functional motor disorders (FMD) refer to weakness or movement disorders that are genuine but do not relate to an underlying neurological disease. FMDs are responsible for up to 16% of referrals to neurology outpatient clinics and are among the top five reasons for referrals. Despite high prevalence the etiology and pathogenesis of FMDs remain obscure. FMD treatment is challenging and overall prognosis has been poor. However, over the last couple years there has been progress in standardization of treatment approaches. Psychotherapy including cognitive behavioral therapy has been used though there are limited published data. Comprehensive rehabilitation strategies including physical, occupational therapies in conjunction with the motor retraining have been increasingly utilized. Consensus recommendations for physical therapy of FMDs have been published in 2014. Despite that progress, a small number of intense physiotherapy trials demonstrated beneficial outcome compared to standard of care. Long term data on maintenance of effect are still missing. Future treatment approaches for FMD will be based on better understanding of the pathophysiology of the condition. In this debate format presentation, the speakers will present the current data, pros, cons and knowledge gaps on the role of rehabilitation approaches for management of FMDs.