**Abstract**

**A-22-03249**

**Details**

**Information**

Event

[Congress Europe 2022](https://my.ean.org/s/event/a1M3Y000007KjnwUAC/congress-europe-2022)

Stage

Closed

Type

Poster or Oral

Status

Accepted

Abstract Topic

Cognitive neurology/neuropsychology

Date Submitted

10/01/2022 23:47

**Body**

Title

Functional Cognitive Disorder is a multisystem condition affecting reaction time and metacognition

Introduction

We hypothesised that FCD is characterised by heightened subjective mental effort, exhausted attentional reserve and metacognitive failure.

Methods

Stroop colour-word task in which attentional demand was varied by task difficulty (congruent/incongruent cues) and the presence of an auditory stimulus (passive/active listening to oddball-type paradigm). We measured subjective mental effort, objective performance, metacognition and EEG-based biomarkers of mental workload (including P300 suppression).

Results

We tested 19 patients with FCD and 23 healthy controls. FCD patients reported higher levels of depression, anxiety, fatigue, pain, sleep disruption, dissociation and obsessiveness. FCD was associated with slower reaction times; however the Stroop effect was similar in both groups. FCD patients reported greater mental workload and poorer self-rated performance when performing the congruent Stroop task in noisy conditions. However, accuracy did not differ between groups in any condition, suggesting that FCD patients are more prone to metacognitive error. Biomarkers of mental workload were similar in both groups, regardless of task difficulty.

Conclusion

In our sample, FCD was characterised by altered mood, somatic complaints, dissociation, and obsessiveness, suggesting syndromic overlap with mood disorders, chronic fatigue and pain. FCD was associated with metacognitive failure in that patients reported high subjective mental effort and poor self-reported performance but were just as accurate as controls. However, FCD patients were slower than controls, providing some objective support for the subjective “brain fog” commonly reported in this condition. We found no evidence of changes in EEG biomarkers of mental workload.

Disclosure

None

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