

# Psychological characterization of FND patients: a pilot study

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## BACKGROUND

Interest in Functional Neurological Disorders (FNDs) has grown recently, yet their pathophysiology remains unclear, and treatment is often viewed as psychiatric. Advances in terminology, mechanisms, and a multidisciplinary approach have improved understanding, but further exploration of the psychological profile of FND patients is essential for personalized care.



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SOCIETÀ ITALIANA PARKINSON E DISORDINI  
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## OBJECTIVES

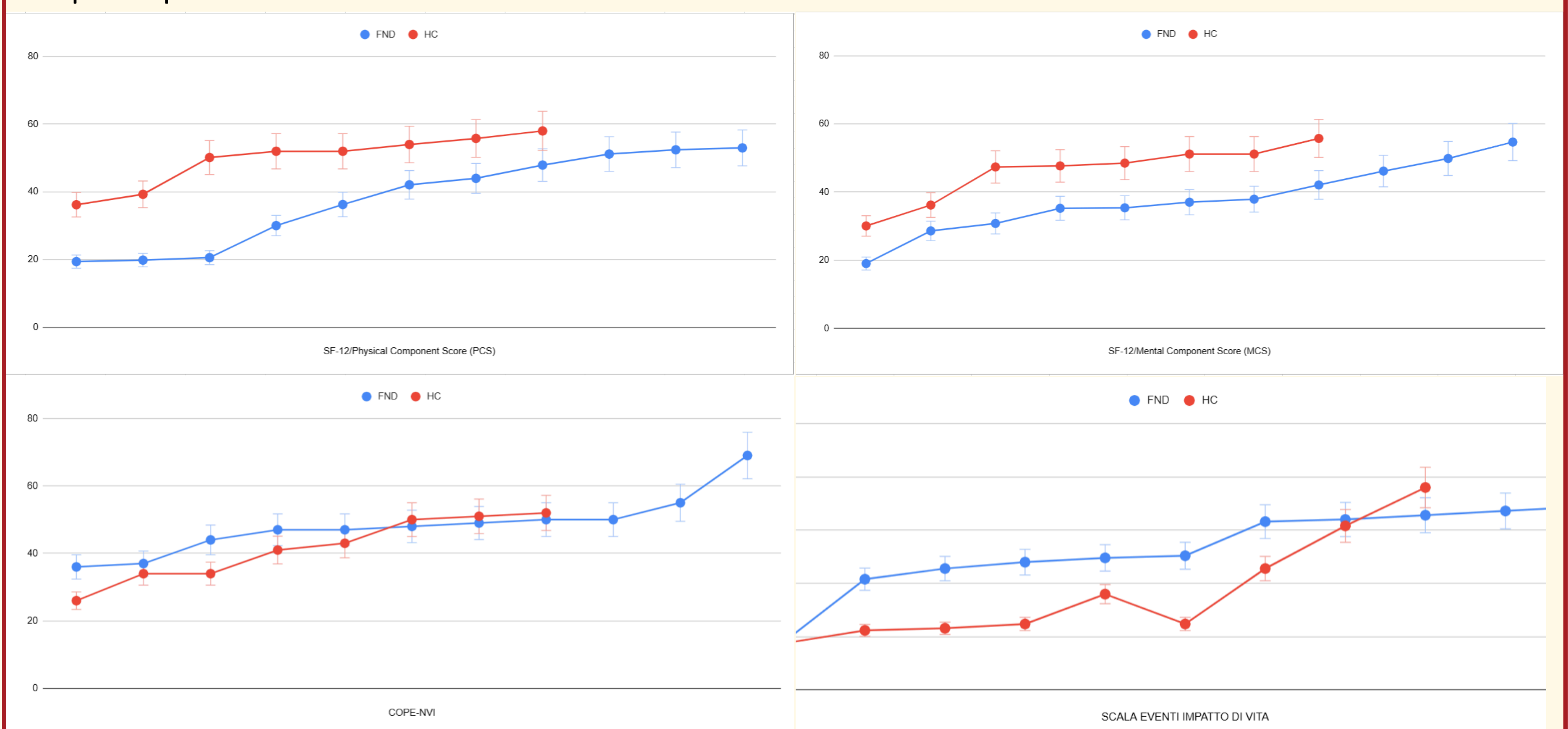
Our study aimed to assess the psychological and behavioral characteristics of patients, their quality of life, coping strategies, and avoidance symptoms, and establish if these characteristics could help develop patient-tailored therapeutic approaches.

## METHODS

The study, conducted via an online survey, involved 19 female participants (11 with FNDs and 8 healthy controls) aged 20 to 60. Data on socio-demographics, psycho-socio-emotional variables, and quality of life were collected. Participants were assessed using psychometric tools: SF-12 (Short Form Health Survey) [1] for quality of life, COPE-NVI (Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced – New Italian Version) [4], for coping strategies, and the Life Event Impact Scale for post-traumatic stress [5]. Statistical differences were analyzed using a one-tailed t-test, Cohen's d, and Welch's formula to account for sample size variations.

## RESULTS

Our results suggest that participants with FND show greater life event intrusion compared to the control group (mean score of  $25.27 \pm 7.87$  vs  $16.62 \pm 9.76$ ), with non-significant trends towards higher scores in the other dimensions of the scale (avoidance and hyperarousal). A significant difference was found between the groups regarding quality of life, which was more compromised in both physical (mean score of  $37.83 \pm 12.78$  vs  $49.61 \pm 7.78$ ) and mental (mean score of  $37.86 \pm 9.61$  vs  $45.96 \pm 8.53$ ) components for participants with FND.



## CONCLUSIONS

Our study focuses on FNDs as outcomes of unresolved trauma. Effective interventions currently target both symptoms and the underlying causes. An integrated mind-body approach, utilizing therapies like Cognitive Therapy [2], EMDR [3], and Schema Therapy, has shown success in reducing symptoms and facilitating the processing and rewriting of past traumas.

## REFERENCES

