

## What Are Psychogenic Tics? (Functional Movements Resembling Tics)

Hello everyone! In this video today I'm going to be talking about psychogenic tics.

Now, psychogenic tics are something that I wasn't really aware of until recently. They're also known as functional tics, they can be part of functional neurologic disorder or functional movement disorder. At first it was confusing because I thought that all tics were neurological, but psychogenic tics do have more of a psychological origin. I think more people have become aware of this recently because there have been articles in the news about loads of people developing tics during the lockdown period, so I think people are speculating as to why this may occur. I was doing a bit of research into psychogenic tics just because I was interested and I thought I'd make a video on it, as I think someone might have asked me about it once before. I'm not sure, but I think someone did ask me about it, so I thought I'd make a video on it!

So, what I have learnt so far is, it is important to distinguish psychogenic tics from Tourette's and other conditions that can cause tics like PANDAS / PANS because the management / treatment is different. For psychogenic tics it's mainly I think therapy based and you find ways of managing the underlying anxiety and stress which could actually bring on the psychogenic tics, whereas Tourette's tics are neurological and people usually use things like CBIT or medication. The medication used for Tourette's tics can... well there are

a few different ones, but I think the most common class is antipsychotics, even though tics aren't a form of psychosis, but that's just medication. I believe what it does is, it reduces dopamine (but don't quote me on that, I might be wrong), but I was on antipsychotic medication once and I think that's what it's supposed to do. But these medications can sometimes be effective for Tourette's tics but not so much for psychogenic tics. However, psychogenic tics can sometimes respond to a placebo.

Psychogenic tics are different to Tourette's and PANDAS / PANS tics in the sense that they don't usually have a premonitory urge. For people with Tourette's and PANDAS / PANS, the tics often have a sensation before them. Not always but they often do, and this sensation can... well it feels different for everyone, it's really difficult to describe but, it can feel a bit like a pressure or it can feel like there's something stuck inside you or on your skin or something, it's quite difficult to explain but it's very uncomfortable. People with psychogenic tics don't usually get this, and as well as this, people with Tourette's and PANDAS / PANS tics can usually suppress tics (not all the time but sometimes and for a short amount of time sometimes), but people with psychogenic tics / functional tics can't actually suppress.

Both motor and vocal tics can occur in people with psychogenic tics. However, people with psychogenic tics are less likely (apparently) to have coprolalia, echolalia and things like that. Psychogenic tics do often come in conjunction with psychogenic seizures

and other functional movement disorder symptoms. As well as this, people with psychogenic tics are more likely to have high levels of stress, anxiety, depression or something like that, whereas people with Tourette's often have co-occurring conditions like ADHD, OCD, sensory processing issues and stuff like that, so there is a little bit of a difference in the comorbidity as well.

People with psychogenic tics don't often have the same sort of pattern of tics changing as people with Tourette's and PANDAS / PANS usually do. When you have Tourette's or PANDAS / PANS the tics can pass and be replaced with other tics but when you have psychogenic tics they mostly stay the same I think, and as well as this, PANDAS / PANS onset is sudden. Tourette's onset can be sudden or gradual, but psychogenic tics do often come on suddenly, and the age of onset is usually a bit different. Psychogenic tics usually occur in around late teenage years or early adulthood or in adulthood in general - something like that, whereas Tourette's most often starts in childhood.

People with psychogenic tics are less likely to have the family history of tics. Some people with Tourette's have a family history of tics or things like OCD because Tourette's is said to be genetically predisposed - it runs in families, but psychogenic tics aren't genetic so you're less likely to have the family history there.

Psychogenic tics can get worse with attention and they can get worse when in certain environments or around others. The same can occur for neurological tics as well but psychogenic tics are usually just highly

suggestible, and just like typical tics they are also distractible so if someone with psychogenic tics is absorbed in something else, the psychogenic tics and psychogenic movements may decrease.

People with Tourette's and PANDAS / PANS may sometimes tic in their sleep but people with psychogenic tics usually don't. When you research psychogenic tics there are some results that come up and can sort of help you distinguish, but there isn't as much information about psychogenic tics as there is on Tourette's and stuff, but I now see that it is quite important sometimes to distinguish it because the management strategies are different, but it is really important to remember that psychogenic tics are real and people aren't doing it on purpose. Just because it's psychogenic and is triggered by stress and maybe anxiety, it's not that the person is choosing to do these things - they are still fully involuntary, it's just maybe the brain's way of coping, it doesn't necessarily know how to process emotions, so it isn't that someone's doing it on purpose. Just because it's psychological doesn't mean it's fake, it is completely valid and it is something that people do experience.

As I said, the reason a lot of people have been thinking about psychogenic tics is because of the stuff in the news about loads of people developing tics over the lockdown period and it's thought that this may be down to psychogenic tics. However, it could also be down to PANS. A lot of people in the PANS community have been saying that it could actually definitely be PANS, because PANS can be triggered by viruses and if people are getting a virus

they could potentially develop these symptoms as well, so it may not necessarily be psychogenic movements. Maybe for some people it could be, but for others it could be PANS as well. So, I think that's important to bear in mind.

Psychogenic tics are sometimes misdiagnosed as Tourette's syndrome but psychogenic tics aren't the same thing. Psychogenic tics can last years, but as I said they do have differences and with the right support then people with psychogenic tics can maybe see some improvement, but not necessarily with tic-related medications.

I hope you enjoyed watching this video and I hope you learnt something from it. I will link down below some of the articles where I actually learnt about psychogenic / functional tics, so that you can learn more and so that I can credit the people that I have actually learnt from. But yes, hopefully this is helpful for some people. Thank you for watching!

Sources:

'Positive Diagnosis of Psychogenic Tics'

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25487253/>

This is a fantastic article written by Tictock therapy (a wonderful tic management consultant) regarding the increase in tics over lockdown, it explains psychogenic / functional tics in detail.

<https://www.tictocktherapy.co.uk/post/sudden-onset-of-tics-is-this-the-next-pandemic>