

# A pilot study evaluating the outcomes of a therapeutic neuropsychiatry assessment for Paediatric Functional Symptoms at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH)



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## Introduction

There is a shortage of specialist services available to children and young people with functional neurological disorder (FND). A recent study found up to a fifth of patients presenting to paediatric neurology clinics had FND.<sup>1</sup> These patients often present with a high degree of functional impairment and comorbid mental health conditions, which impacts their socialisation and ability to engage in education. Our aim was to undertake a service evaluation for a pilot FND therapeutic assessment clinic at GOSH. We aimed to establish demand for the service and investigate benefits and outcomes from a one-off neuropsychiatric consultation.

## Aims

- Service evaluation for a one-off therapeutic assessment review within the functional neurological disorders pilot clinic at GOSH
- To review the clinical outcomes of patients seen in clinic
- To evaluate patient and caregiver satisfaction with the service

## Results

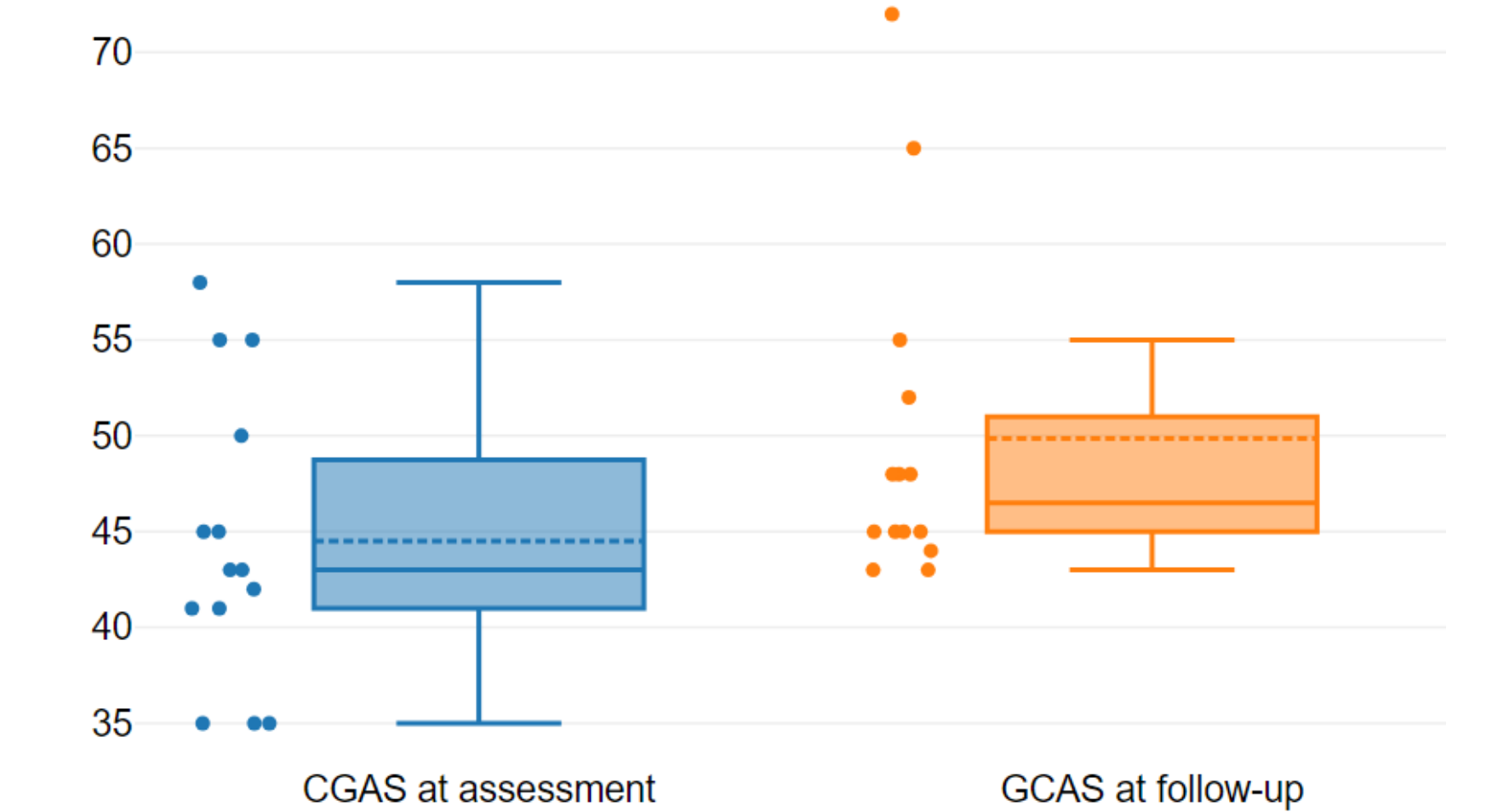
Follow-up telephone calls were conducted roughly 8 months after initial consultation. 14 of the 20 families seen in clinic consented to follow-up interviews.

- 2 families declined to participate
- 4 were not contactable at the time of follow-up.

Satisfaction questionnaires were scored using a Likert-scale (1- very dissatisfied; 5- very satisfied)

	Median Scores
Did you feel listened to?	5
Did you talk about what you wanted to talk about?	5
Did you understand the things said in the meeting?	5
Did the appointment help you better understand your difficulties?	5
Did you feel the meeting gave you ideas for what to do to help the young person assessed?	4.5
Did you leave the meeting with a sense of what should happen next?	5
Overall, how was your experience at the FND clinic at GOSH?	5
Overall, how has your experience been with local follow up?	1.5

## CGAS scoring

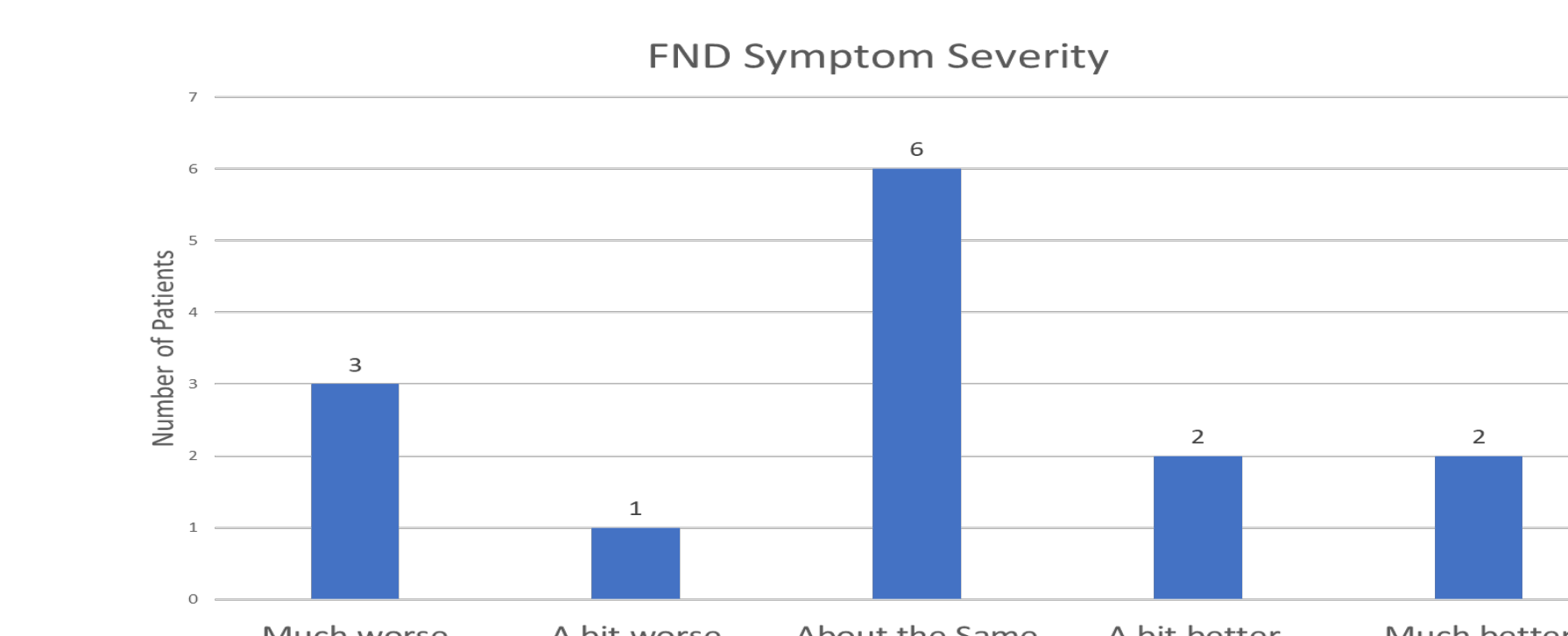
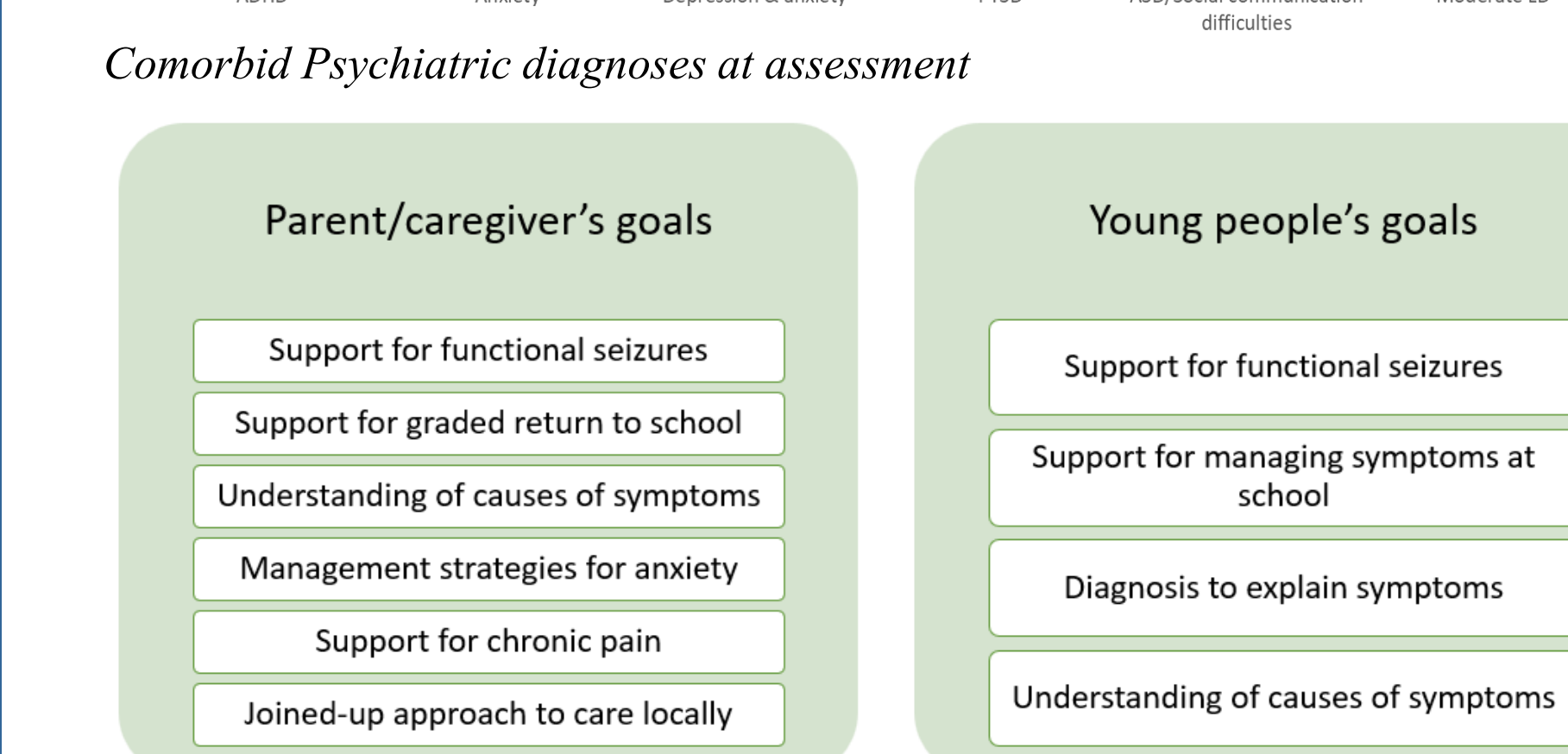
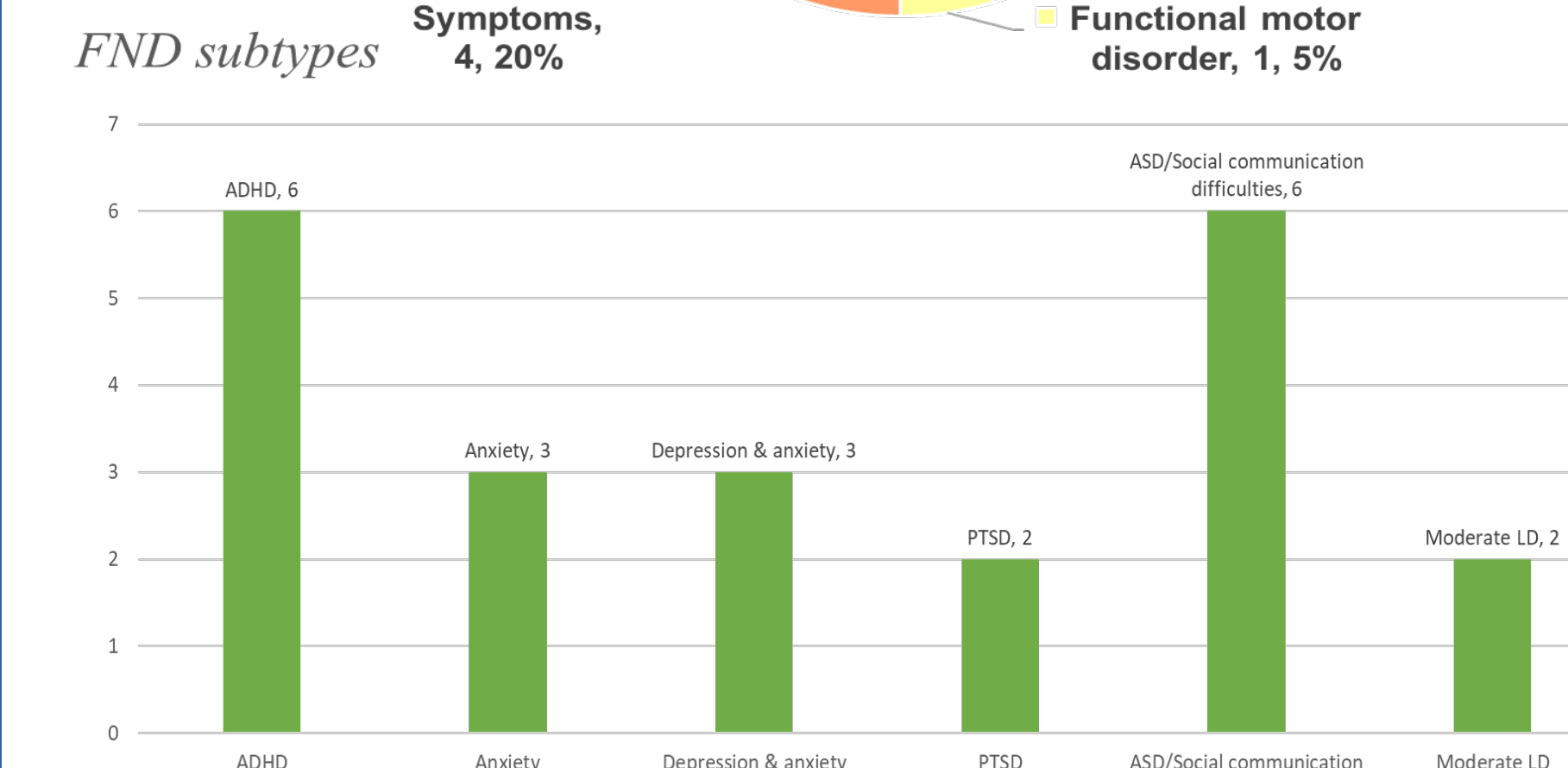
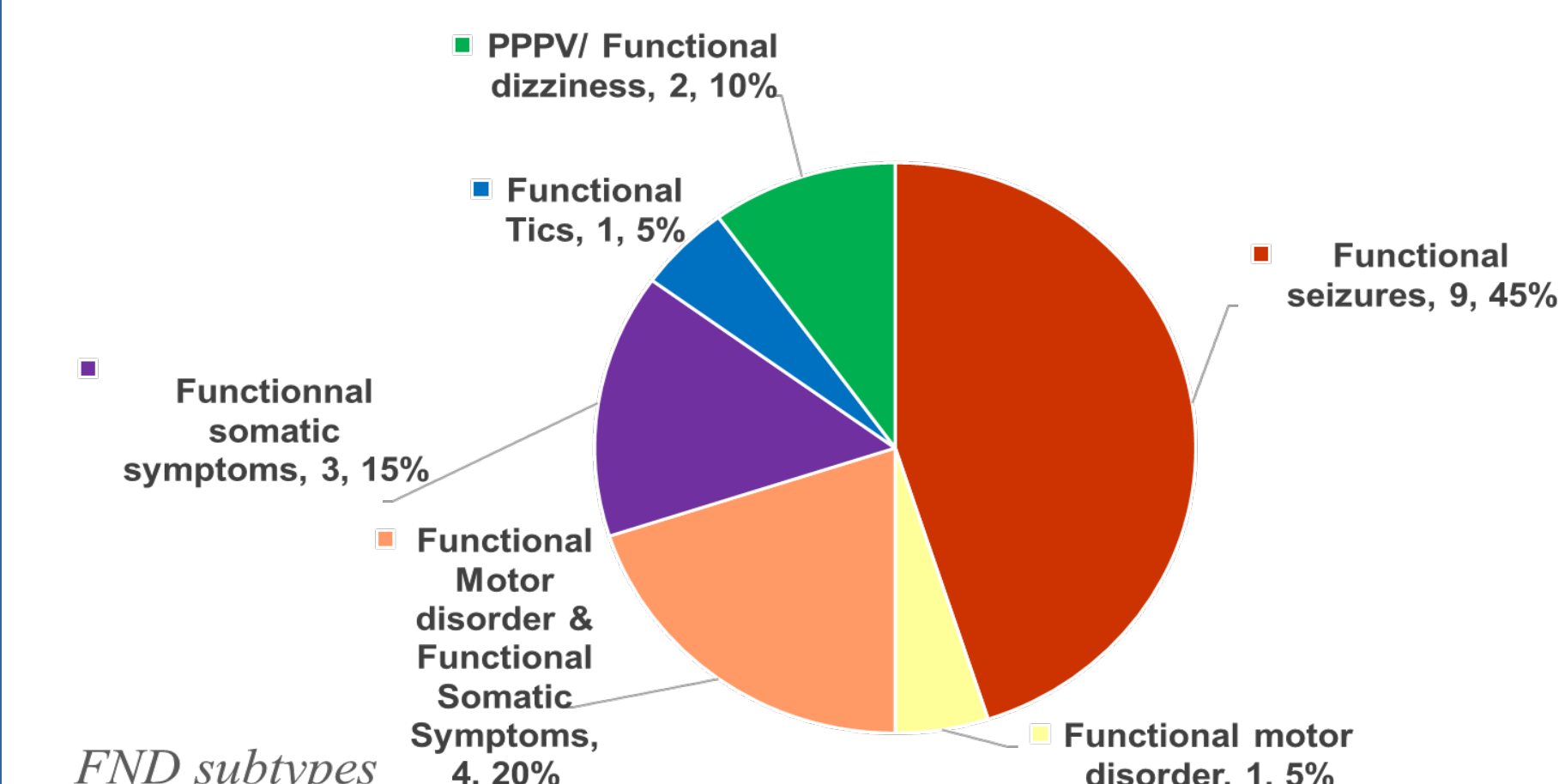


### Children's Global assessment scale scores

A Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was conducted to compare the consultation and follow-up GCAS scores of participants. The test indicated a significant difference between the paired observations,  $W = 2.5$ ,  $n = 14$  pairs,  $p = .007$ , with a large effect size,  $r = 0.73$

## Participants

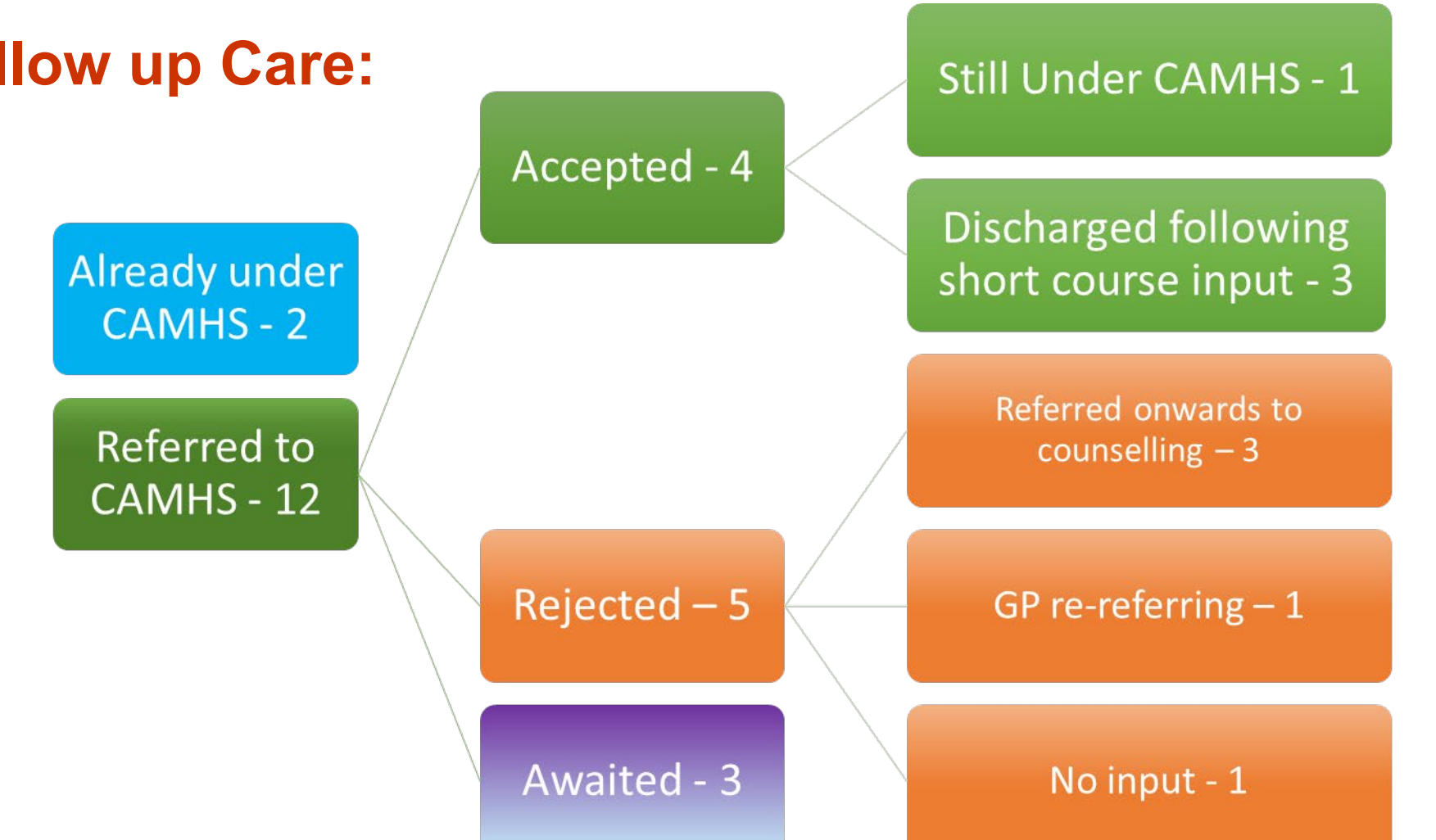
- 20 participants seen in clinic - 17 female; 3 male.
- Average age 12 years 8 months
- 14/20 participants had diagnosed or suspected comorbid mental health conditions



## Themes of Parent feedback

- **Explanation of functional diagnosis**
  - Families felt listened to and reassured
  - Helped understand and manage symptoms better
- **Local CAMHS teams**
  - Referrals often rejected
  - Lack of understanding of FND/ support
  - Long waiting times to be seen
  - Difficulty obtaining further assessments (e.g. ASD/ ADHD)
- **Schools**
  - Difficulty getting reasonable adjustments/ support
  - Lack of understanding
- **Treatment plans**
  - "Have to do it on your own"
  - 3 sought private therapy/ support
  - Stigma from medical teams and GP

## Follow up Care:



## Methods

A non-randomised before-and after study was conducted for young people seen in the GOSH FND pilot clinic between May 2022-Oct 2023. Accepted patients received a one-off outpatient MDT therapeutic consultation with a CAMHS psychiatrist, neurologist, physiotherapist and OT to discuss FND symptoms and background history. Symptom severity and level of functioning was scored using the Children's Global Assessment Scale (CGAS). Clinicians provided psychoeducation, devised treatment plans including follow-up assessments, onward referral to local services and consultation with teams, where appropriate.

Follow-up data was collected using semi-structured telephone interviews and patient satisfaction questionnaires. Questionnaires were scored using a Likert rating scale (1: very dissatisfied – 5: very satisfied). Interviewers collected information about FND symptoms and daily activities, and assigned CGAS scores (raters were blinded to CGAS scores at assessment). Transcripts of parents responses were reviewed to collect themes of their opinions.

## Conclusion

Families felt the pilot FND clinic was helpful. However, their negative experience of follow-up highlights an area of unmet need. Despite some improvement in mean CGAS scores at follow up, the majority of patients experienced a moderate degree of interference in functioning. Further provision of specialist neuropsychiatric services, specifically evidence-based interventions and improved liaison with local CAMHS to improve outcomes and reduce morbidity-cost for young people with FND.

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