



Functional Tic-Like Behaviors (FTLBs) are a heterogeneous spectrum of abnormal, involuntary movements or vocalizations that resemble tics but are manifestations of a **functional neurologic disorder** rather than a primary tic disorder such as Tourette Syndrome.

KEY FEATURES	EPIDEMIOLOGY	PATHOPHYSIOLOGY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Abrupt onset ▪ Rapid escalation of symptoms ▪ Complex motor and vocal behaviours 	<p>Often occur in adolescents and young adults, especially females and are associated with psychosocial stressors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, anxiety disorders and/or other psychiatric comorbidities, and exposure to social media content about tics.</p>	<p>Proposed complex interplay of neuro-biological vulnerability, predisposing psychological factors, and social modelling.</p>

	TYPICAL TOURETTE SYNDROME TICS	FUNCTIONAL TIC-LIKE BEHAVIOURS
Age of onset	Childhood	Adolescence (>12 yo) or early adulthood
Symptom onset	Gradual	Abrupt/acute onset with rapid evolution of symptoms
Sex	Male predominance	Female predominance
Most common tics	<p><u>Simple motor and vocal tics</u> <i>Involves a small muscle group, producing an isolated movement or simple sound</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shoulder shrugging ▪ Sniffing ▪ Throat clearing ▪ Facial grimace 	<p><u>Complex tic-like movements and/or vocalizations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large-amplitude limb, head, or neck movements ▪ Self-injurious behaviors ▪ Non-stereotyped, variably produced tics ▪ Complex or context-dependent words/phrases ▪ Marked variability in frequency/intensity with prolonged symptom-free periods
Most common comorbidities	ADHD OCD	Anxiety disorders Depressive disorders

NEXT STEPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accurate diagnosis is essential, as standard tic medications (e.g. alpha-2 agonists) are typically ineffective for FTLBs and are <i>not</i> recommended. ▪ Clinical diagnosis should follow the ESSTS 2022 criteria for clinical diagnosis of FTLBs, with referral to a Child Neurologist or Psychiatrist. ▪ Management focuses on addressing comorbid anxiety and depression, stress reduction, personalized psychoeducation, mitigating exposure to social media tic content, and behavioural therapy.

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