

Progressive Non Fluent Aphasia (PNFA)

About the condition

Progressive Non Fluent Aphasia (PNFA) is the name given to a condition that affects a person's ability to use language. It forms part of a group of related conditions referred to as Frontotemporal dementia (FTD for short).

FTD is a progressive illness that primarily affects parts of the brain at the front and side of the head (temples). FTD mainly affects behaviour and language skills, although these do not usually appear together in the early stages of the illness. For that reason FTD is usually divided into two categories called:

- Behavioural variant FTD (bvFTD)
- Language variant FTD

Changes that might happen

A person may:

- develop slow or hesitant speech e.g. speaking in shorter sentences
- find it more difficult to speak or start a conversation; preferring to listen instead (referred to as 'effortful' speech)
- find it difficult to find the right word
- become less fluent i.e. make mistakes in the grammar of sentences; increase the number of pauses in speech
- find it difficult to understand complex sentences
- make mistakes in sounds used in speech.

Things to consider

Researchers are continually refining the ways in which doctors identify conditions like PNFA. Sometimes different groups of researchers use different names for the

same condition or the names change over time. For example, PNFA can also be called Non Fluent/ Agrammatic Variant PPA (Primary Progressive Aphasia). This can be confusing and can make getting information difficult. (see a list of web contacts below).

Currently, there is no cure or specific treatment for PNFA. There may be ways to treat some of the symptoms but these will depend on the individual's needs.

Below are some tips about communicating with a person with PNFA. The list is not exhaustive and individuals and families often come up with their own ways to make communication easier, such as:

- keep sentences relatively simple if possible
- give the person time to respond in conversation
- the person affected may increasingly use gestures
- speech therapy may help in some cases – contact your GP for a referral to a Speech Therapist.

Useful information

www.ftdtalk.org (provides jargon free research updates on FTD)

www.ftdsg.org (formerly the Pick's Disease Support Group; provides newsletters, local contacts)

www.ucl.ac.uk/drc/support-groups/PPA-support-group (support group specifically for PP, including PNFA and Semantic dementia)

www.ppaconnection.org (international website founded by researchers into FTD; contains information and research on PPA)



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