

Differentiation and Symptom Progression of bvFTD, svPPA, and nfvPPA Subtypes Using UDS-FTLD Module Behavior Measures

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Introduction: The ALLFTD Consortium has collected the most comprehensive longitudinal dataset of socioemotional behavior in early frontotemporal dementia (FTD) using the NACC FTLD Module (FTLD-MOD) tests. We examined baseline and longitudinal performances on FTLD-MOD behavior questionnaires (Social Norms Questionnaire (SNQ22), Social Behavior Observer Checklist (SBOCL), Behavioral Inhibition Scale (BIS), Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), and the Revised Self-monitoring Scale (RSMS)) for diagnostic differentiation and measuring disease-related decline in socioemotional behavior.

Methodology: Test scores for 536 symptomatic ALLFTD participants (435 behavioral variant FTD (bvFTD), 106 semantic variant primary progressive aphasia (svPPA), 95 non-fluent PPA (nfvPPA)) and 475 neurologically healthy older controls from UCSF were compared using logistic regression modeling, longitudinal mixed effects modeling, and power analyses to estimate clinical trial sample sizes.

Results: Multiple logistic regression models combining all five questionnaires discriminated nfvPPA from svPPA (AUC=0.90), nfvPPA from bvFTD (AUC=0.87), and bvFTD from svPPA (AUC=0.81). The RSMS Sensitivity to Socioemotional Expressiveness subscale best discriminated nfvPPA from bvFTD (AUC=0.83) and nfvPPA from svPPA (AUC=0.79). Mixed models demonstrated significant within-cohort differences across CDR® plus NACC FTLD levels as well as between-cohort differences. Longitudinal mixed models showed differences in rates of decline within diagnostic groups, but with unexpected differences in baseline performance likely due to study artifact.

Conclusion: The FTLD-MOD behavior questionnaires provide strong diagnostic differentiation among bvFTD, svPPA, and nfvPPA patients on both single and combined measures. Moreover, they capture longitudinal behavior change, though more pre-post data from individuals converting from asymptomatic to symptomatic FTD is still needed to make longitudinal estimates more accurate.

Conflicts of interest

No relevant disclosures.