

A cross-sectional exploration of obsessive and compulsive symptoms in FTLD-spectrum disorders

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State of the Art: Repetitive behaviors are common and often disabling in frontotemporal lobar degeneration (FTLD) disorders. To examine the extent that these repetitive behaviors encompass symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), we examined data from the Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale (Y-BOCS) collected as part of the North American ALLFTD (ARTFL-LEFFTDS Longitudinal Frontotemporal Lobar Degeneration) consortium.

Methodology: 180 participant-rated and 186 study partner-rated Y-BOCS were collected from a diagnostically mixed sample of participants. We used a 2-part hurdle model, corrected for age and sex, to examine correlations between Y-BOCS score and disease severity as measured with the CDR®+NACC-FTLD. Similar models were used to examine relationships between participant and study partner's rating of OCD symptoms, Y-BOCS and the Neuropsychiatric Inventory Questionnaire (NPI-Q, N=115), and Y-BOCS and atrophy of regions of the prefrontal cortex implicated in OCD (N=43).

Results: Participants and study partners reported obsessive thinking and compulsive behaviors in individuals with FTLD-spectrum disorders at all levels of CDR®+NACC-FTLD Global Score. The severity of OCD symptoms and the proportion of individuals with symptoms increased with CDR®+NACC-FTLD Global Score. Study partners reported similar or higher severity of OCD symptoms compared to participants. Higher Y-BOCS scores were associated with increased atrophy in the orbitofrontal and anterior cingulate cortices as well as higher scores on the agitation, anxiety, and disinhibition subdomains of the NPI-Q.

Conclusion: These findings suggest that obsessive thinking and compulsive behaviors are prevalent in FTLD-spectrum disorders. Higher Y-BOCS scores may have specific neuroanatomical and behavioral correlates in this population.

Conflicts of interest

N/A