

Diagnosis of Tourette Syndrome in Adulthood



- Tourette Syndrome (TS) and other Persistent Tic Disorders are clinical diagnoses. There are no current blood tests or imaging studies needed to diagnose Persistent Tic Disorders. TS is a neurodevelopmental disorder.
- It is difficult to predict any one individual's clinical course, but in general, most people's tics start in childhood (often between the ages of 4-8), peak in severity in early adolescence, and then gradually decrease during later adolescence.
- While many people experience a reduction in the severity of their tics as they move from adolescence to adulthood, most people continue to have some tics.
- Only ~10-20% of individuals with TS experience tic remission in adulthood.
- Moreover, one-third of individuals with TS experience bothersome tics in adulthood, and at least 40% of adults with TS avoid social situations because of tics.

TS is more than tics:

- 90% of individuals with TS meet the criteria for a co-occurring psychiatric diagnosis during their lifetime; 60% meet the criteria for two or more diagnoses.
- The most common psychiatric diagnoses in TS populations are mood disorders, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
 - Relative to the general population, individuals with TS are at:
 - 4-fold greater odds of completing suicide
 - 2.5-fold higher risk of substance-related death
 - 2.8-fold higher risk of obesity
 - 1.7-fold higher risk of type 2 diabetes
 - 1.8-fold higher risk of cardiovascular diseases
- TS does appear to present differently in men and women, though more research is needed to better characterize and understand these differences.
- TS is highly heritable. Family studies report a 10- to 100-fold increase in the prevalence of TS in first-degree relatives of affected individuals compared with control relatives.
- Girls with TS are often overlooked because they appear to suppress tics earlier in childhood, which can delay their diagnosis or lead to misdiagnosis.
- Many tics can be subtle and easily hidden from others but still produce agitation or discomfort for the individual with the tics.