

DIFFERENTIATION OF FATIGUE AND TIREDNESS VOCABULARIES IN US AND UK PD PATIENT SAMPLES



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INTRODUCTION

Chronic fatigue is a major determinant of quality of life in Parkinson's disease (PD) with a third of people with PD (PWP) reporting fatigue as their most disabling PD symptom. Fatigue is however difficult to define, particularly with respect to tiredness. The present study addresses the need for a PWP-friendly vocabulary able to differentiate fatigue and tiredness.

METHODS

A questionnaire-based study compared a US group (n=13, b1943-64) and a UK group (n=9, b1944-72). English was their first language and all were resident in the country where they completed the questionnaire. Study participants were presented with 39 words or phrases (Figure 1) and asked to state whether each mapped better to "fatigue" or to "tiredness". PWP were allowed to avoid giving a response if they did not know the meaning of a given word or phrase.

Figure 1. Descriptors and synonyms



RESULTS

When expressed in order of selectivity for fatigue over tiredness (Figure 2), the following terms showed the highest selectivity in the US group: fatigue (12:0 fatigue:tiredness), feeble (11:2), fatigued (11:2), debility (10:3) and lack of stamina (9:3). In the UK group, the terms showing highest selectivity for fatigue over tiredness were lethargic (9:0 fatigue:tiredness), lack of energy (8:1), fatigue (8:1), drain (8:1) and lack of stamina (7:2).

Figure 2: Fatigue vs tiredness in the US sample

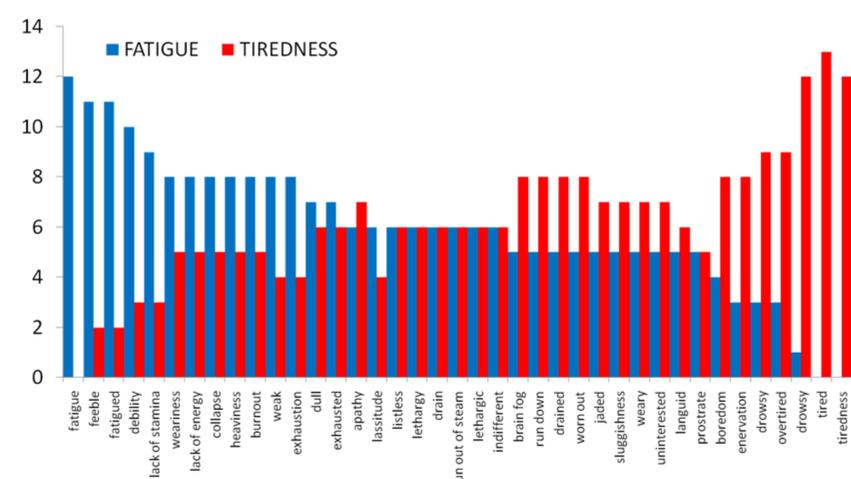
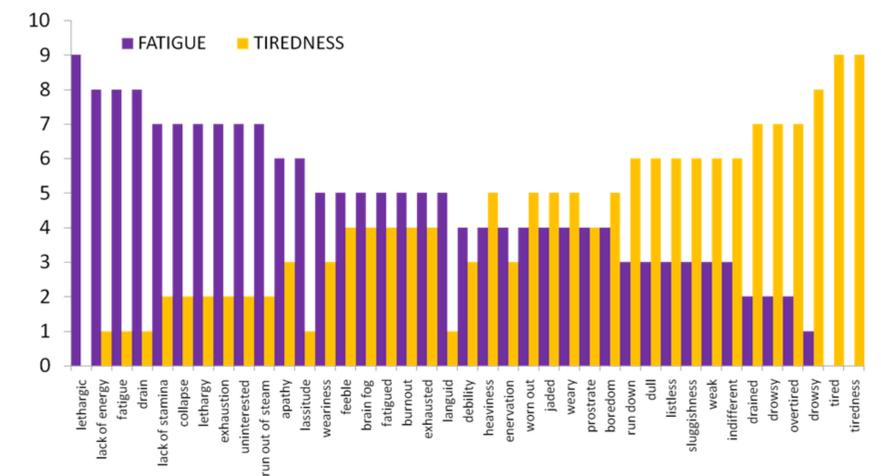
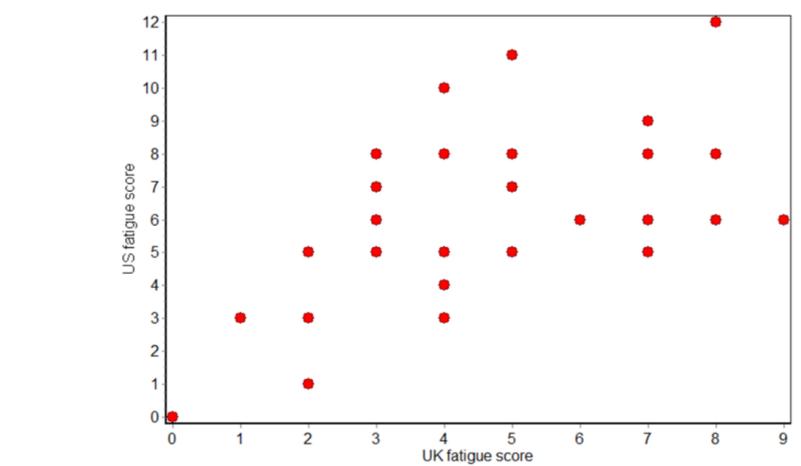


Figure 3: Fatigue vs tiredness in the UK sample



Two of the top five terms for fatigue were common to both US and UK groups. Conversely when expressed in order of selectivity for tiredness over fatigue, the following terms showed the highest selectivity in the US group: tiredness (12:0 tiredness:fatigue), tired (13:0), drowsy (12:1), overtired (9:3) and enervation (8:3). In the UK group, the terms showing highest selectivity for tiredness over fatigue were: tiredness (9:0 tiredness:fatigue), tired (9:0), drowsy (8:1), overtired (7:2) and drained (7:2). There was a modest correlation between the US and UK selectivity data (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Correlation of US and UK fatigue scores



Four of the top five terms for tiredness were common to both US and UK groups. A total of 7 participants (4 US, 3 UK) did not know the meaning of 8 words (6 US, 5 UK).

CONCLUSIONS

- Certain words or terms are poorly understood by the test sample.
- There is a wide range of understanding and association of the terms with some giving clear differentiation.
- These data may be helpful in operationalising a clinical scale for fatigue in Parkinson's.
- There are no significant differences between US and UK English speakers in differentiation of terms.