



The South African Porphyria Foundation

BRAIN FOG

Many porphyria patients, during the height of an acute attack, find normal / simple tasks as being the most difficult or impossible.

Porphyrics will find themselves most insecure and frustrated, while having to deal with common ordinary experiences, while suffering "brain fog".

Because of the porphyria patient's cognitive problems they will even find it very difficult to express confusion itself! This is where a supporting (and porphyria-educated) family member / friend becomes (again) so important.

YOU WILL OFTEN SEE THE SIGNS BEFORE THE PATIENT DOES.

Rosalie Jones (FNPNeuropsychiatric), wrote:

"For most acute porphyria patients the negative aspects of "brain fog" disappear as does the acute attack itself. In those porphyria patients with chronic smoldering effects and especially for those with chronic pain "brain fog" will often linger.

Exercise and quality rest are the essentials to fighting such "brain fog."

Most Porphyrics will agree that the toughest symptom to deal with, is not the physical pain / discomfort. It is the damage it causes in their relationships. "Brain Fog" in Porphyrics is the roots of many evils in their relationships with themselves, their beloved ones and others.

...

"We can always deal with the physical symptoms, ...we have to. Even when we feel we do not want to fight this fight anymore, our will to live is as strong as our will to give up"

diagnosed porphyric for 18 years. –

Cognitive Disturbance causes the Porphyric to be severely misunderstood.

Confusion often presents during onset of an acute attack of porphyria.

Also termed as mental change "Brain Fog" is considered a Cognitive Disturbance.

Acute porphyria patients often describe their ability to focus and remember or function as being in a "fog". Confusion is generally characterized by:



- 1) Bewilderment,
- 2) Lack of attention,
- 3) Inability to make decisions.

Cognitive disturbances involve a difficulty in basic mental operations that we usually take for granted. A porphyric will typically suffer the following symptoms when in a state of “Brain fog”:

- 1) Disorganized thought,
- 2) Decreased ability to grasp the large / whole concept (big picture).
 - 3) Can not pay attention or focus attention on something
 - 4) Unable to shift attention rapidly
- 5) Difficulty shifting attention from one subject (or idea) to another
 - 6) Unable to track two processes at once
 - 7) Inability to use an effective order in carrying out details
 - 8) Disturbed orientation in regard to time, place or person
 - 9) Decreased memory retrieval ability
 - 10) Forgetfulness
 - 11) Memory loss
- 12) Trouble tracking the flow of a normal conversation
 - 13) Comprehending becomes labored
 - 14) Disorganized speech
 - 15) Difficulty expressing
- 16) Transposing or reversing of letters or numbers
 - 17) Cannot perform calculations
- 18) Prioritizing becomes next to impossible
- 19) Intellectual concentration is very fatiguing
 - 20) Decreased mental stamina