

# Difference Between Tourettes and Tics

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## Key Difference – Tourettes vs Tics

Tics are involuntary, repetitive movements and vocalizations. Any conditions with this sort of characteristics are collectively called the tic disorders. Tourettes is one such disorder that is characterized by the presence of more severe and frequent tics that last for more than a year. The key difference between Tourettes and Tics is that **Tic disorders include a spectrum of diseases categorized according to the severity and the duration of the symptoms while Tourettes are one such group of tic disorders.**

## What are Tics?

Involuntary, repetitive movements and vocalizations that deviate from the normal behavior are identified as tics. Depending on the duration of the symptoms and their severity tic disorders are divided into main three categories as

- Transient Tic Disorder
- Chronic Tic Disorder
- Tourette Syndrome

## Transient Tic Disorder (TTD)

The exact cause of TTD has not been established, but several studies done on the subject indicate the possibility of a genetic influence. In addition, brain damage due to acquired causes such as depression may also have an impact on the initiation of the pathogenesis.

## Chronic Tic Disorder

This category of tic disorders is characterized by the presence of brief spastic movements or phonic tics. The absence of coexistence of vocal and physical components in chronic tic disorder should be emphasized.

(Tourettes syndrome will be discussed under the heading “What is Tourettes”)

## Symptoms

Abnormal behavioral patterns such as the frequent raising of the eye brows, repetitive movements of the limbs and making different noises repetitively are telltale signs that indicate the possibility of a tic disorder.

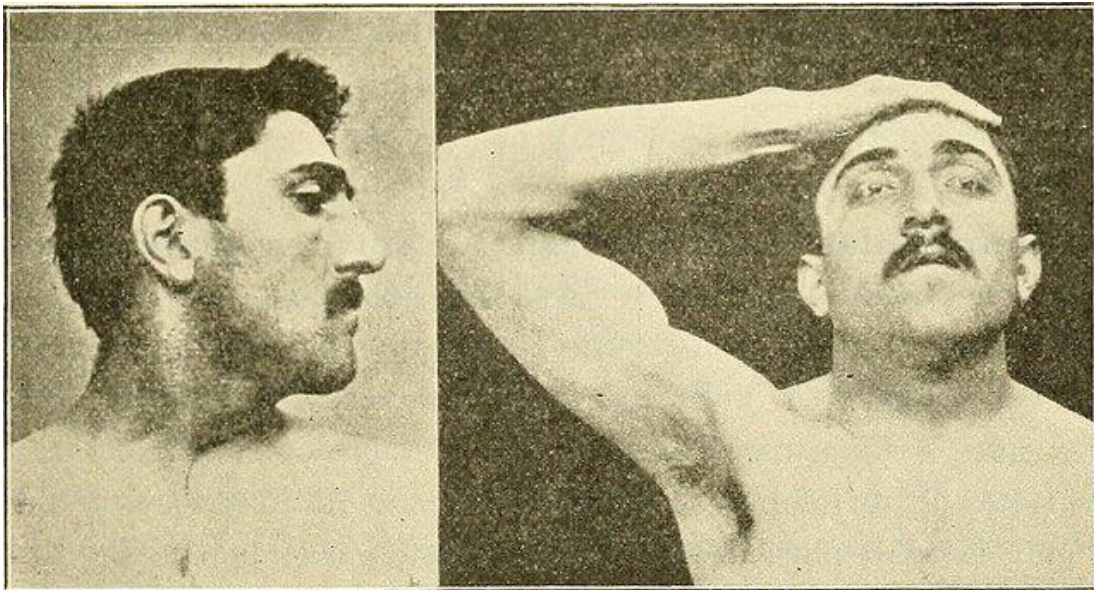


Figure 01: Tics

## Diagnosis

Rather surprisingly, there are no investigations that can be used for the diagnosis of tic disorders. Consequently, the diagnosis of these conditions solely depends on the clinical criteria.

For the diagnosis of TTD, all the criteria given below have to be fulfilled.

- Presence of one or more motor tics or vocal tics
- Duration of the symptoms should be less than one year
- Onset of the symptoms before the age of 18
- Symptoms should not be an adverse effect of any drug or any comorbidity

Diagnosis of chronic tic disorder is based on the following criteria

- Persistence of the symptoms for more than a year
- Any intermittent tic free period should not be more than three months
- Onset of symptoms before the age of 18

## **Treatment**

- Behavioral therapy
- Administration of drugs such as haloperidol

## **What are Tourettes?**

Tourettes is a type of tic disorders that is characterized by the presence of more severe and frequent tics that last for more than a year.

This condition, like all the other forms of tic disorders, is not completely curable. But there are extremely effective treatments to control the symptoms that can enable the patient to lead a normal life.

Symptoms are similar to those of the other tic disorders.

## **Diagnosis**

Diagnosis is based on the presence of criteria mentioned below

- Presence of the vocal or physical tics. It is possible to have both types of tics simultaneously.
- Persistence of the tics for more than a year
- Onset of the symptoms before the age of 18
- Tics should not be caused by any comorbidity and should not be an adverse effect of a drug

## **Treatment**

- Behavioral therapy
- Psychotherapy
- DBS
- Drugs therapy

Drugs that are given in this condition aim at minimizing the levels of certain neurotransmitters whose excess is the cause of neuronal overactivity that gives rise to tics.

Drugs such as haloperidol decrease the level of dopamine. Antidepressants, anti-epileptic drugs and botulin toxin in low doses are also prescribed sometimes.

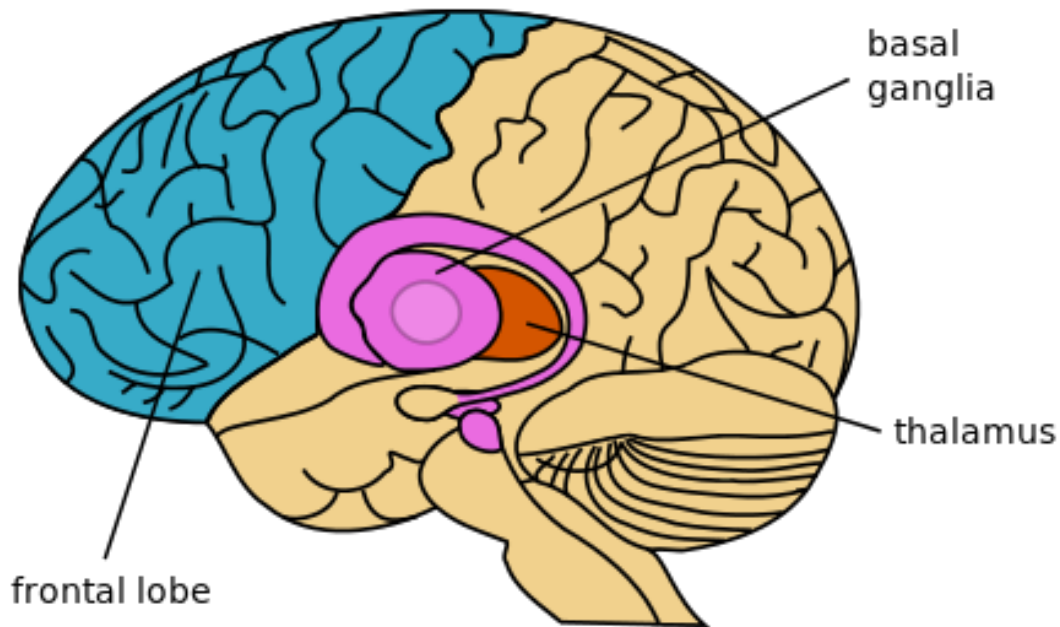


Figure 2: Brain Areas Implicated in Tourettes Syndrome

## What are the Similarities between Tourettes and Tics?

- Abnormal repetitive and involuntary movements and vocalizations are observed in both conditions

## What is the difference between Tourettes and Tics?

### Tourettes vs Tics

Tourettes is a type of tic disorders that is characterized by the presence of more severe and frequent tics that last for more than a year.

Tics are involuntary, repetitive movements and vocalizations.

### Factors Affecting the Process

Tourettes are one group of tic disorders.

Tic disorders include a spectrum of diseases categorized according to the severity and the duration of the symptoms.

## Summary – Tourettes vs Tics

Tics usually appear during the childhood and gradually subside when the patient reaches the teen age. Sometimes the symptoms are mild and not disturbingly apparent. In such a scenario, treatments are not necessary. The presence of severe symptoms can affect the social life of the patient and can be the reason for psychiatric disorders such as depression. Therefore the correct interpretation of the severity of the symptoms and the patient's opinion on the necessity of the treatments must be given priority during the management.

### References:

1. Kumar, Parveen J., and Michael L. Clark. Kumar & Clark clinical medicine. Edinburgh: W.B. Saunders, 2009. Print.

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2. "Brain areas implicated in Tourette syndrom" By Badseed utilizing the work of Leevanjackson and John Henkel. – (Public Domain) via [Commons Wikimedia](#)

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