

Physical symptoms and inexplicable pains/fatigue

Everyone gets tired occasionally or experiences physical problems: after being particularly busy or working intensively, as a result of an illness or accident, an unhealthy lifestyle, emotional events, etc. Thinking about it logically, talking to other people or visiting your GP usually explains the causes and provides remedies such as rest or other remedial actions. If your symptoms persist and do not disappear as a result of rest and/or treatment, and there is no clear physical explanation, it may be a case of chronic fatigue or unexplained physical symptoms (e.g. CANS).

In the case of persistent symptoms of fatigue and/or pain, it is important to properly explore whether there is a medical explanation for the nature and seriousness of the symptoms, as well as which factors exacerbate the problem or are preventing recovery, such as overexertion or lack of exercise, sleeping problems, worry, stress, substance abuse or loss of condition (physical and psychological).

QuickScan

- Do you often feel tired and/or not feel any better despite having rested or slept, as a result of which you are finding it difficult to study?
- Are you persistently suffering from muscle ache, headaches, a sore throat, stomach pains or pain in your joints and is this affecting your ability to concentrate?
- Do you no longer have any energy for or interest in engaging in sports or relaxing/social activities?
- Do you feel like you are no longer able to meet your obligations?
- Are you falling behind in your studies or are your symptoms inhibiting you from studying?
- Do you dread ordinary things, such as walking up the stairs, doing the shopping, meeting friends, studying or attending lectures and tutorials?
- Are your symptoms affecting your mood or do you often feel isolated because you are not able to participate in study or engage with your housemates?
- Are you becoming increasingly passive or actually forcing yourself to do more than is actually good for you?

Approach

What can you do yourself?

The first thing you should do is work out what is really important to you and also try to find a balance between exertion and relaxation (including sports and sleep). It can be a good idea to involve someone else.

What can we do for you?

We can offer you short-term individual consultation and/or help you look for a suitable treatment outside of TU Delft. Visit <http://psychologists.tudelft.nl>.

For more intensive support and treatment, a GP can refer you to such organisations as CIRAN, Sophia Revalidatie and other multidisciplinary treatment centres. Individual (study) support is also possible from the academic counsellor and/or central student counsellor.

More information

- <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/medically-unexplained-symptoms/Pages/Somatisation.aspx>