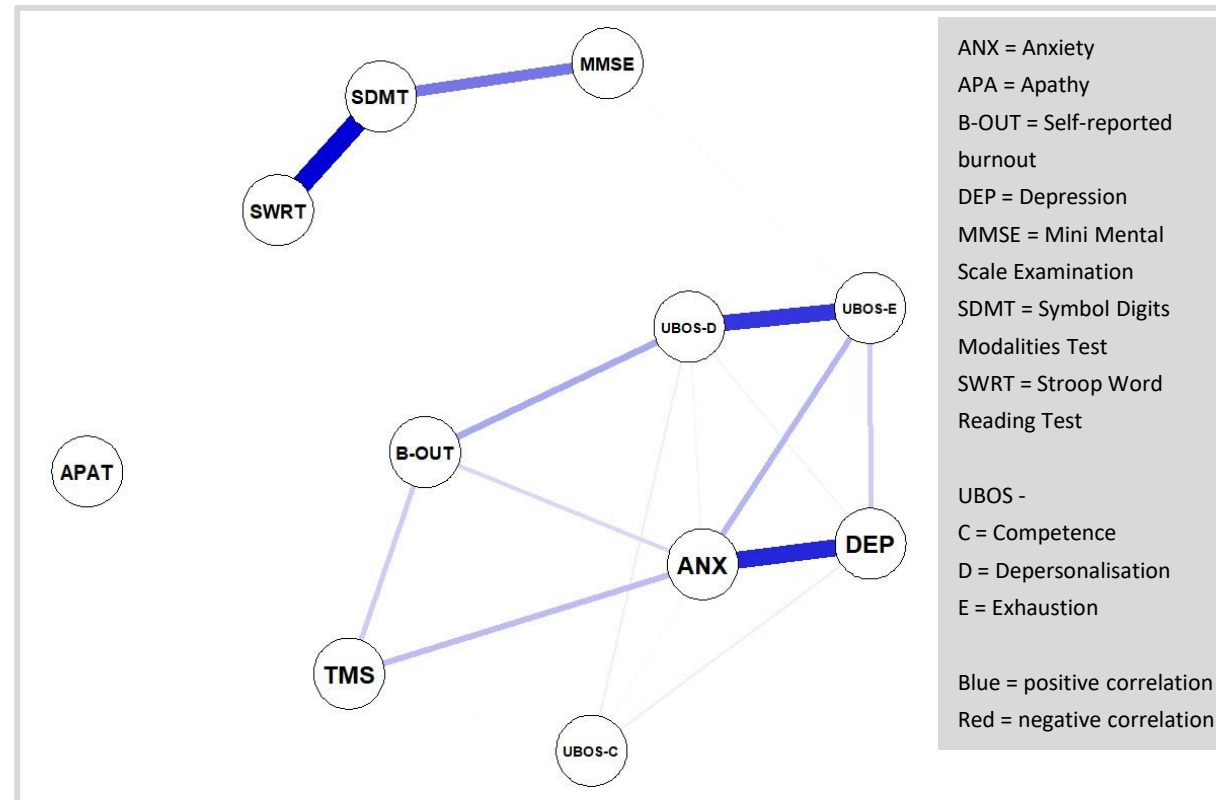


## Is burnout an early sign of Huntington's disease and more prevalent than in the general population?

### Background

Nowadays, chronic work-related stress, also known as burnout, seems to be an ever-growing epidemic. Burnout is defined in terms of depersonalization, feelings of incompetence and occupational exhaustion. This syndrome is often reported by Huntington's Disease (HD) patients, and although we know that 65% of HD patients report work-related changes as one of the first alterations in functional capacity, the prevalence of burnout in HD and its relation to HD has not yet been determined. Therefore, this study evaluates if burnout symptoms are more prevalent in HD than in the general Dutch population. Furthermore, we evaluate if more burnout-related symptoms can confirm the burnout reported in HD. Finally, we determine which disease-specific characteristics are associated with burnout.



A partial correlation network representing the relationship between burnout symptoms and HD characteristics. For instance, exhaustion is moderately related to depression and anxiety. Depersonalisation and exhaustion are strongly correlated to each other. Competence is negatively correlated to depression and depersonalisation.

### Methods

We conducted HD-Work (n = 117), a cross-sectional study assessing burnout, as measured by the Utrecht' Burnout Scale (UBOS) and HD-specific characteristics; i.e., MMSE, SDMT, SWRT, apathy, depression, anxiety, and UHDRS-TMS. We compared the burnout outcomes to the Dutch National Working Conditions Enquiry (n = 62.602) and correlated burnout to the disease-specific measures.

### Results

HD patients who completed all questionnaires (n = 89) did not score differently on burnout symptoms (M = 2.02, SD = 1.53) compared to the general Dutch population  $t(88) = -1.07, p = 0.29$ . Only 5 participants reported burnout, 1 scored above average on every burnout domain. Of the 80 participants not reporting burnout, 4 scored above average on every burnout domain. Therefore, there was no association between reported burnout and burn-out related symptoms  $\chi^2(1, N = 89) = 0.37, p = .54$ . Exhaustion in HD was moderately correlated with depression ( $r = .61, p < .001$ ) and anxiety ( $r = .64, p < .001$ ).

### Conclusions

- Burnout is not more prevalent in HD than it is in the Dutch general population.
- Burnout is not related to early cognitive changes or motor changes.
- Burnout is related to symptoms of depression and anxiety.

