



NSW Speech Pathology Evidence Based Practice Interest Group

Critically Appraised Paper (CAP)

CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE: Specific training of spouses can result in changed communication behaviours. This training can generalise to other, untrained communicative behaviours.

Clinical Question [patient/problem, intervention, (comparison), outcome]:

Part 1: "Which communication partner training methods are effective in facilitating communication activities and participation for people with aphasia?"

Part 2: "Which patients and / or communication partner characteristics lead to better outcomes in communication partner training?"

Citation: Simmons-Mackie, N., Kearns, K., & Potechin, G. (2005) Treatment of aphasia through family member training *Aphasiology*, 1464-5041, volume 19(6), Pages 583 – 593

Design/Method:

- 2 participants, male and female spouses. Man was 4 years post stroke with Broca's aphasia. 42 sessions.
- Treatment aimed at selected behaviours of 'spouse interruptions' and 'excessive use of convergent questions'.
- The behaviour of 'negative teaching' was the control, and not selected for teaching
- Baseline data was collected on all 3 behaviours during conversation which was videotaped in 2 conditions: spontaneous conversations in clinic, discussions of television clips played in clinic, and audio taped: breakfast conversations at home.
- Each session began with wife and spouse videotaped in clinic for both conversation and television clip conditions, with breakfast audiotapes recorded during baseline and periodically
- Recognition training then began, 4x weekly with the spouse (wife)
- Each training session began with definitions of the target behaviours, including how to score recordings
- Training occurred only on "news" segments
- Wife and clinician scored a (-) for target behaviour absent, (+) for present
- Videos played for 10 seconds, they then both scored for 5 seconds.
- Tape was stopped and replayed at the 1 min mark – clinician and spouse compared scores and discussed discrepancies
- Termination of training on a behaviour was 90% recognition and 10% or fewer occurrences of the nonfacilitative behaviour averaged across 2 training sessions.

Participants:

- 62 year old couple married for 40 years
- Husband: 4 years post onset aphasia due to L CVA
- Diagnosis consistent with Broca's aphasia on WAB
- Received language therapy for 4 years
- Wife: year 12 educated, observed speech-language therapy and had received traditional "counselling and education"

Experimental Group: Single case study (with one dyad)

Mav 2002

Form based on Worrall & Bennett, Evidence based Practice: Barriers & Facilitators for Speech-Language Pathologists, *Journal of Medical Speech-Language Pathology* 2:9, xi – xvi
Updated February 2006

Control Group: N/A

Results:

- spouse training resulting in reduction of occurrence of target behaviours in training condition
- also generalised to both untrained conditions and untrained behaviours
- all results maintained in follow up probes
- wife claims also increased partner's expressive communication in conversation (no data)
- took a total of 42 sessions to reach targets
- 1 condition: convergent questioning, needed to be modified in order for spouse to reach target

Comments – Strengths/weaknesses of paper:

Strengths

Length of training sessions – 42 hours

Testing of both untrained conditions and untrained behaviours to check for generalisation

Weaknesses

Single case study

No time limit on reaching targets

No data to support claims of partner's results

Follow up probes only 1 month post treatment

Possible interference of communication samples being knowingly recorded- ? accurate sampling

- 1 condition: convergent questioning, needed to be modified in order for spouse to reach target

Level of Evidence (NH&MRC): IV

Appraised By: Adult Language EBP Group

Date: 2011