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A joint venture of Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and the Department of Communication Science and Disorders at the University of Pittsburgh

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Survey Results Presented at ASHA

Many of you participated in our online survey for the *Stuttering Center News*. The results of the survey were presented at the annual conference of the American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association (ASHA) in Chicago, IL in November.

Currently, over 150 people receive the newsletter via our email distribution list. The newsletter is read by parents, speech-language pathologists (SLPs), adults who stutter, and others.

The results of our survey were very positive. None of the surveys contained a "negative" response to any of the items. Some of the noteworthy results include:

1. 74% of the respondents rate the overall quality of the newsletter as "excellent."
2. The *Stuttering Center Update* section was rated as the most helpful, with other sections closely following in the number of positive responses.

3. As a group, SLPs rated the benefits of the newsletter higher than any other group of respondents.

The survey has been very helpful to us as we evaluate the value of the newsletter for our subscribers, and we are grateful to the readers who completed the survey. We are also pleased to welcome our new readers.

The full presentation and survey results can be viewed at www.stutteringcenter.org by selecting "Handouts."

ASHA Convention: Fluency Update

Several outstanding seminars on stuttering were presented at this year's ASHA convention. A **brief** recap of some of those presentations is provided here. SLPs who are members of ASHA can view handouts at www.asha.org

The *Stuttering Center's* own J. Scott Yaruss and colleague Nina Reardon discussed treatment approaches for preschool children. The session provided a number of useful strategies for working with families and preschoolers to achieve optimal outcomes from therapy. (The handout is available on our website.)

A panel discussion titled "Journeys to Fluency: Rationales for Choosing a Therapeutic Path (Ingham, Ratner, Finn, & Manning) included a lively debate about evidence-based practice in the treatment of stuttering.

Treatment options for school-age children were discussed by Donaher, Scott-Trautman, Caggiano, Shine, & Murphy. Both speech modification and stuttering modification techniques were discussed.

The implications of research for the evaluation and treatment of preschoolers was reviewed in an interesting

and well-attended seminar by Ambrose & Yairi.

Hood provided numerous helpful suggestions for adults who stutter in "Realistic Outcomes for Long-Term Change."

Finally, the positive and negative aspects of assistive devices for stuttering were debated by Molt, Merson, Stigora, & Kehoe.

There were also many other interesting sessions! If you are interested in getting more information on any of these topics, visit the ASHA website or email us!!



Stuttering Center Update: Upcoming Presentations

The staff at the Stuttering Center of Western Pennsylvania frequently give presentations on stuttering both locally and nationally. Some of our upcoming presentations include:

Children who Stutter: Strategies for Clinical Practice (J. Scott Yaruss): January 15, 2004 in Oklahoma City, OK at the Hilton and January 16, 2004 in Little Rock, AR at the Holiday Inn.

On February 6, 2004, Yaruss

will also present treatment strategies for school-age children and teenagers in Baltimore, MD. Baltimore will also be the location for the annual convention of the National Stuttering Association (NSA) in June 2004.

Stuttering Center Newsletter: A Model for Increasing Community Involvement (Craig Coleman): February 18, 2004 for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Speech and Hearing Association.

For more information on our

upcoming presentations, or for handouts from previous workshops, visit our website at www.stutteringcenter.org

*Visit the NSA's brand new website at www.WeStutter.org

**Editor's Note: This newsletter concludes our first full year of publication. We want to thank all of our readers for making it a success. Best wishes for a happy holiday season!! See you in 2004! CC and JSY*



Clinicians should collect data to prove that their treatment approach is effective and efficient.



The issue of evidence-based practice (EBP) is certainly a "hot topic" in the field these days. EBP refers to the practice of selecting treatments from among those that are described in the literature and validated by research.

Currently, there is a significant and somewhat contentious debate about EBP in fluency disorders. Some clinicians prefer to rely solely on EBP, while others combine evidence from the literature with evidence from their own prior experiences.

In our opinion, clinicians can find a balance between these methods of selecting treatment. Clinicians must use their clinical skills and instincts to develop individual-

ized treatments to ensure that treatment does not become a "recipe" guided by predetermined steps. At the same time, we must also be able to provide a rationale for **why** we use a specific approach, and we must understand the data supporting that rationale.

Most importantly, clinicians must be able to demonstrate, on a case-by-case basis, that their treatment goals and objectives are appropriate for their clients, and that their clients are indeed making progress in treatment.

Unfortunately, our field is presently lacking the data needed to show the efficacy of some treatment programs. In our opinion, these treatments should not be dis-

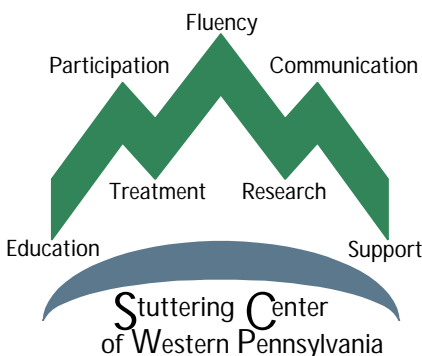
carded just because we do not yet have data to demonstrate their effectiveness. Instead, clinicians should focus on obtaining data to prove that their approach is worthwhile. It is simplistic to dismiss a program that has no data. Lack of data does not mean a lack of effectiveness; it simply means that there are no data.

All treatment programs, for any disorder, start out with no data. We should not forsake treatments that may be shown to be better than existing treatments until we have the data to evaluate their effectiveness. Of course, we also need to continue to use proven treatments while we are gathering data to support our future endeavors.

One last note of caution may be issued for treatment programs that only have short-term data, or data that has not been proven beyond the university setting, where conditions may be ideal.

The Stuttering Center of Western PA's four-part mission.....

- Treatment for people who stutter
- Research on the nature and treatment of stuttering
- Education for students and clinicians interested in learning more about stuttering
- Support for people who stutter, their families, & their clinicians



Q & A: How Do We Work on Desensitization to Stuttering?

The fear of stuttering can be very powerful. Many people who stutter, including adults and children, need to become desensitized to their stuttering so it has less of an impact on their daily lives.

There are many ways to work on desensitization. Perhaps the most effective

way is to *stutter on purpose* in various communication situations (e.g., ordering at a restaurant, giving a speech, talking on the phone, etc.). This can help people have a sense of control over their stuttering and also help them practice being a successful communicator while still stuttering.

Another way to work on desensitization is to help clients educate other people in their environment about stuttering. This may include parents, classmates, family, friends, spouses, and even employers. Education often helps to take the “mystery” out of stuttering and thereby reduce the fear of stuttering.

National Stuttering Association Corner

Dan Kremer, Leader of Pittsburgh Chapter of the NSA

The Pittsburgh Chapter of the National Stuttering Association had its annual holiday party on December 10, 2003. A good time was had by all. For the first meeting in January 2004, we will be playing a game involving operant and classical conditioning. For the second meeting in January, we hope to have a guest speaker, David Early. Mr. Early is an actor who has appeared in many well-known films, including *Silence of the*

Lambs and many *George Romero* movies. He is a fixture within the Pittsburgh Public Theater circle. Please note that this is still tentative. For the first February meeting, we will be screening a movie called “Talk to Me,” starring Austin Pendleton. This film is a TV-made drama about the Hollins Institute and a man's struggle to come to terms with his stuttering.

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SLP Corner: Targeting Multiple Objectives in Stuttering Therapy

Kristen Kostelich, Graduate Student, University of Pittsburgh

A key goal for children who stutter is understanding how they talk. You can help them using metaphors, such as “kangaroo speech,” “turtle speech,” and “rabbit speech.”

A helpful activity for teaching children about speech is a game that highlights differences between turtle speech (slow rate), rabbit speech (fast rate), and kangaroo speech (repetitions). To support this goal, I made a game board with pictures of turtles, rabbits and kangaroos.

First, we teach children about stuttering by reviewing different ways of speaking. Using the game, we can help

children further understand the different types of talking.

The child rolls the dice and moves the right number of spaces on the board. When he lands on a space, he performs the type of speech that goes with the animal shown on the board. When he lands on a rabbit, he says something using a fast rate of speech. When he lands on a turtle, he says something using slow and easy speech.

This also helps to desensitize children to stuttering, because if they land on a kangaroo, they produce a disfluency on purpose. Desensitization is a key activity

for helping kids become more comfortable working on their speech.

The game reinforces awareness, as well. When it is my turn and I land on a turtle, I can produce a disfluency on purpose to see if the child notices. If he does not say anything, I can prompt him by asking if I said that using good turtle speech.

Generalization is also targeted by seeing if the child can carry over the use of “turtle speech” in conversation while playing the game. Thus, this one activity helps clinicians target multiple objectives. Good luck!

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The Stuttering Center offers evaluation and treatment through Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh in Oakland and at our satellite offices in Bethel Park, Monroeville, and Wexford. Visit the Children's Hospital website at www.chp.edu for directions.

Find us on the Web!

www.stutteringcenter.org

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**Send us your questions
& comments and *don't*
*forget our survey!!!***

