On the efficacy of stuttering treatment for adolescents who stutter: Long-term and short term outcomes

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Abstract

Adolescence is a unique time where the transition from childhood into adulthood takes place. Despite the dramatic changes in physical, emotional and cognitive domains that are likely to impact stuttering treatment, adolescents’ response to stuttering treatment is not well documented. The Michael Palin Centre provides an intensive two-week therapy programme for adolescents who stutter. This programme consists of three components including speech management skills, cognitive behavioural therapy, and communication skills training. The overarching goal of this programme is to reduce overt and covert symptoms of stuttering. This poster presents data from a group of adolescents who stutter who attended the programme during a 3-year time period (2008-2010). Data will be presented from 38 adolescents who attended the intensive programme. All were between the ages of 16;0-18;11. This is a longitudinal study that measures stuttering severity (SSI-3), frequency (%SS) and a battery of self-report questionnaires over a 12-month period. Stuttering frequency measures were taken from videos the adolescents made at home during reading and in conversation. Questionnaires were completed at eight time points during the programme were taken and include a pre-therapy baseline, treatment initiation, treatment conclusion, and at 5 follow-up sessions. Preliminary results have been completed for the first four measures. For stuttering frequency, there is no change during the two-month baseline before therapy. After the intensive treatment there is a reduction in stuttering frequency in reading. This reduction in stuttering frequency is maintained over a 5-week follow up period. A similar pattern emerged for stuttering severity with stuttering severity not changing during the baseline, but reducing immediately after treatment and maintaining 5 weeks after treatment. A full analysis of the maintenance of stuttering frequency and severity over the long-term will be presented as well as an analysis of the results from the self-report questionnaires.

Keywords: Intensive stuttering therapy; Adolescents; Long-term therapy outcomes; Short-term therapy outcomes

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