Finding the Relationship between Communication and Participation

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The Relationship between Narrative Informativeness and Activity and Participation in Chronic Stroke-Induced Aphasia

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Aphasia is an acquired communication disorder, an impairment on an established language system affecting production and comprehension of language due to brain damage. This has drastic affects and impacts all aspects daily living across all modalities. Previously, measures in speech and language therapy in aphasia management focused on discrete object naming tasks, or the impairment itself, but research in aphasia management is moving towards a broader sense of supporting communication success for persons with aphasia (PWA).

Discourse measures were developed to gain a more complete picture of a PWA’s functional communication abilities. Discourse sampling, obtained in a controlled clinic/lab environment of semi-spontaneous nature, is one newly developed method to evaluate the quality or effectiveness of discourse produced by PWAs. Discourse that is elicited by picture description, narrative recall, and procedural discourse may provide a more accurate measure of the functional communication abilities of PWAs.

Additionally, there is no standard assessment battery to measure activity and participation impact, and is up to clinician discretion to choose appropriate assessments that will reflect accurate management and rehabilitation of a PWA’s language and communication abilities, activity, and participation (Cochran review). Some formal measures include the Assessment for Living with Aphasia (ALA), Communication Confidence Rating Scale for people with Aphasia (CCRSA), Geriatric Depression Scale short form (GDS), and Community Integration Questionnaire (CIQ). The psychosocial factors measured by these assessments can have a significant impact to the person with aphasia (PWA) and may impact communication success after treatment.

Although there are many reports on discourse and on activity and participation measures reported in those with chronic stroke-induced aphasia, no studies have examined the relationship of these deficits/measures to each other. It is also not known whether improvements in discourse are related to improvements in activity, participation, and psychosocial outcomes. The purpose of this study is to understand discourse sampling results and its relationship to secondary outcomes related to psychosocial impact of aphasia, as measured by the ALA, CCRSA, GDS, and CIQ in a large sample of PWAs.