

Poster Submission

Title:

THE EFFECT OF WORK STATUS ON AFFECTIVE, BEHAVIORAL, AND COGNITIVE REACTIONS IN SPEAKERS WITH SPASMODIC DYSPHONIA

Presenter(s):

C.R. Watts

Davies School of Communication Sciences & Disorders, Texas Christian University

c.watts@tcu.edu

M. Vanryckeghem

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of Central Florida

martinev@ucf.edu

Abstract:

Spasmodic dysphonia (SD) is a focal laryngeal dystonia manifesting as involuntary hyperkinesia in the laryngeal muscles. SD is task-specific to phonation, meaning that the dystonia does not occur at rest and is typically only present during voicing behaviors. While overt voice characteristics of SD are measurable and are supported by a robust research base, the impacts of SD on covert emotions, attitudes, and perceived quality of life resulting from disability and handicap are less understood. Covert reactions to one's voice quality and function can serve to maintain and/or exacerbate voice problems. As an example, Trait Theory (Roy & Bless) suggests that heightened sensitivity inherent to some speakers may lead to the development of vocal responses manifested as excessive muscle tension. As such, psychological and physiological responses to vocal impairments can serve to further impair a speaker and potentially exacerbate disability and handicap. In order to assess the affective, behavioral and cognitive sequelae that might surround the disorder of SD, the Behavior Assessment Battery© (BAB) for Adults who Stutter (Brutten & Vanryckeghem) has been adopted from the field of stuttering and adapted for the disorder of SD. In a pilot study, Vanryckeghem and Ruddy (2015) found significantly higher scores on all BAB subtests between speakers with PD and unimpaired controls.

This presentation will report data from a study investigating the effects of work status on BAB subtest scores in speakers with SD. 148 speakers (retired n=52; working n=98) with SD were recruited to participate. All participants completed the four BAB subtests. The subtests included: Communication Attitude Test for Adults (Big CAT), which assessed the speakers' speech-associated attitude; the Behavior Checklist (BCL), which assessed the speakers' coping behaviors associated with SD; the Speech Situation Checklist –Emotional Reaction (SSD-ER), which assessed speakers' negative emotional reactions to speaking situations; and the Speech Situation Checklist – Speech Disruption (SSC-SD), which assessed the degree of speech disruption in speaking situations. Findings revealed non-significant mean scores on the BigCAT, SSD-ER, and SSD-SD subtests, indicating that attitudes towards speaking, emotional reactions to speaking, and the degree of speech disruption when speaking was similar between the two groups. However, there was a significant effect of work status on BCL scores ($F[1,146] = 5.06$; $p = 0.019$) indicating that the speakers with SD who were currently employed utilized a greater quantity of coping behaviors to compensate for their impairment during communication situations. The presentation will attempt to explain the rationale for findings and discuss potential implications of the study results for management of populations with SD.