Improving Home Program Practice for People with Post-Stroke Aphasia

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INTRODUCTION

- Speech-language pathologists who work with people with aphasia implement home programs to increase the number of practice sessions and functional practice in home environments.
- It is unknown how speech-language pathologists implement home programs.
- Information about whom and how clinicians use home programs will improve understanding of how best to support clinicians and people with aphasia in the aspect of clinical practice.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to examine the current clinical practice of home programs and its success for people with aphasia.

METHODS

Survey Methodology

We used survey methodology to gather data from current speech-language pathologists about the types of home programs they employ for their clients with aphasia. The survey deployed via Qualtrics© included both open-ended and multiple-choice questions and was distributed on professional discussion boards, professional and personal social media accounts, and through emails.

Survey Question Examples

- Sample open-ended question:
  When creating a home program for a person with aphasia, what are the three interventions or activities that you use most often to improve any aspect of language?

- Sample multiple-choice question:
  For how many of your clients with aphasia do you create home practice programs?
  a) 1-25% of my clients with aphasia
  b) 26-50% of my clients with aphasia
  c) 51-75% of my clients with aphasia
  d) 76-99% of my clients with aphasia
  e) All of my clients with aphasia

RESULTS

Strategies to Instruct Clients about Home Programs

- Most participants (51.2%) indicated they discuss how clients can fit recommendations into a daily routine.
- Frequent home program instruction strategies included a paper handout, visual demonstration, and guided practice.

Integration of Technology in Home Programs

- Most participants indicated they never use computer programs (51.2%) or video conferencing (68.8%).
- No participants marked always using any of the included technology techniques.

Promoting Adherence

- The use of a logbook, journal or diary was variable across participants.
- Most participants indicated they never use a mobile application (56.5%), incentive charts (83.8%), or behavioral contracts (83.8%).

DISCUSSION

- Most speech-language pathologists report developing home programs for people with aphasia but there is a lack of consistency in the implementation methods.
- Common instructional methods include paper handouts, visual demonstration, guided practice, and a discussion about fitting recommendations into a daily routine.
- Many home programs explored the use of technology.
  - However, clinicians are not currently integrating technology with high frequency.
  - More research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of various home program implementation plans.