



Stuttering Academy:

An Initiative to Target Improved Health Literacy for Professionals and the Public

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BACKGROUND

Many speech-language pathologists (SLPs) lack foundational knowledge and/or comfort assessing and treating stuttering (Coleman & Weidner, 2014; Coleman, Bleyle, & Cauvel, 2015; Tellis, Bressler, & Emerick, 2008). This problem can lead to lack of comprehensive assessment and/or treatment for people who stutter. The lack of knowledge also filters down to other related professions, such as educators (Barney & Coleman, 2014), which can impact the social and educational outcomes for children who stutter.

Lack of professional knowledge can also lead to reduced health literacy for consumers. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines health literacy as “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.” Reduced health literacy can cause consumers to seek solutions to health concerns that are not viable. In addition, myths surrounding a condition are more likely to persist, and the client may be more susceptible from negative experiences in their environment, such as stigma.

PURPOSE & METHODS

The purpose of this poster presentation is to describe the current need for improved health literacy related to stuttering, and describe one mechanism that can allow professionals and the general public to improve their understanding of stuttering. Previous research on the level of health literacy in stuttering was reviewed. Several findings are highlighted below. The authors, who both have specialized training in stuttering, then took those findings to develop initial content for a member-based website as well as a social media platform specifically devoted to improving health literacy in stuttering.

HIGHLIGHTED FINDINGS

- In a study of pre-service teachers, Barney & Coleman (2014) reported that 0% (n=17) were able to correctly define stuttering.
- In a pre-post study of 21 SLPs, Coleman & Weidner reported that 4% were able to correctly define stuttering prior to a 2-day continuing education workshop, while 50% gave fully correct answers and 50% gave partially correct answers following the workshop.
- Bass, Coleman, & Weidner (2017) reported that 15% of SLPs were able to write treatment goals on negative reactions to stuttering.

STUTTERING ACADEMY

The Stuttering Academy is a website designed to:

1. Provide a continuous flow of information geared toward clinicians through flash webinars (~10 min) on topics related to stuttering (see examples below) at an affordable cost (visit www.stutteringacademy.com)
2. Provide access to assessment tools that members can use to assess the impact of stuttering in multiple situations. Specifically, they have access to the newly developed *Community-Centered Stuttering Assessment* protocols, which examine the perspectives of the child who stutters, and the child’s parents, speech-language pathologist, and teachers.
3. Provide a forum for discussion among professionals and people who stutter (available at the Stuttering Academy Facebook Group).
4. Provide links to educational materials that were developed by the authors for children.

Webinar Topics Include:

- Epidemiology
- Defining stuttering
- Causes
- Strategies
- Preschool Assessment
- Preschool Treatment
- Report and goal writing
- What to say and not to say to a child who stutters
- Risk factors

DISCUSSION & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Since the Stuttering Academy’s inception in January, 2018, the website has been viewed nearly 16,000 times with more than 9,500 unique views. In addition, the Facebook group has over 1,300 followers representing 38 countries. Figures 1 and 2 show the recent community engagement on both the website as well as the Facebook group.

Figure 1. Website traffic from September 20, 2018 – October 29, 2018



Figure 2. Facebook engagement from January 1, 2018 – October 29, 2018



These numbers indicate a strong interest in learning more about stuttering. Providing a consistent flow of information and discussion topics is key to engagement. Future goals will aim to increase the number of members, as content continues to build. In addition, the Stuttering Academy plans to host a journal club, where members have access to discussion about current and previous research in stuttering.



Scan this QR code using your smart phone camera to learn more about the Stuttering Academy!

REFERENCES

- Bass, E., & Coleman, C. & Weidner, M.. (November, 2017). Goal-Writing in Stuttering Treatment. Poster presented at the Annual Conference of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Los Angeles, CA.
- Bleyle, L., Cauvel, C., & Coleman, C., (November, 2014). Assessing speech language pathologists’ knowledge of stuttering. Presented at the annual convention of the American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association, Orlando, FL.
- Coleman, C. & Weidner, M. (November, 2014) Stuttering U.: A summer camp for children who stutter and their families. Presented at the annual convention of the American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association, Orlando, FL.
- Tellis, G. M., Bressler, L., & Emerick, K. (2008). An exploration of clinicians views about assessment and treatment of stuttering. *Perspectives on Fluency and Fluency Disorders*, 18(1), 16-23.

