Functional Outcomes of an Intensive Aphasia Treatment Program

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**BACKGROUND**

Intensive aphasia treatment
- Research in aphasia therapy indicates that treatment offered intensively over a short duration results in clinically significant outcomes (Bhogal et al. 2003).
- However, investigations of this nature typically use impairment-level outcome measures (e.g., Western Aphasia Battery) and use group data to analyze treatment efficacy. This study reports individual outcomes across three functional communication measures for 21 participants who completed an intensive, short-term residential therapy program.

**METHOD**

**Subjects**
Participants were 6 months or more post onset and stroke was the primary etiology of aphasia

**Weekly Recreation Therapy:** Individual sessions
- (e.g., golf lesson, pottery class, bike riding, swimming, gardening, cooking)
- Group sessions: to facilitate socialization & participation
  - (e.g., art therapy, museum visits, bus tour, game night)

**Communication Partner Participation:**
- Family member or friend who attends and participates in individual therapy sessions, communication training, aphasia simulations and partner group sessions (i.e., caregiver burnout, stress, coping)

**RESULTS**

**Treatment**
- 100 hours of Speech-Language Therapy (5 hours daily):
  - 1 hour Individual: Language production and comprehension skills (e.g., Cueing Verb Treatments, Visual-Action Therapy) & Motor Speech (e.g., Rosenbek’s Eight-Step Continuum)
  - 1 hour Individual: Reading and writing (e.g., Parallel Oral Reading)
  - 1 hour Individual: Functional communication (e.g., PACE, phone use, Communication ADL)
  - 1 hour Group: Computer skills (e.g., e-mail, Internet)
  - 1 hour Group: Conversion activities (e.g., weekly newspaper, constraint ‘go fish’ game)

**Weekly Group Community Reintegration:**
- Individual goals targeted through group outings such as: shopping, going to the library, awareness project

**Weekly Physiotherapy:**
- Group exercises classes

**Outcome Measures**
- Communicative Effectiveness Index (CETI; Lomas, Pickard, Bester et al., 1989)
- Self-Assessment of Communication Skills (SACS; Lear & Sperry, 1997)
- Communication Activities of Daily Living-2 (CADL-2; Holland, Frattali, & Fromm, 1999)

**DISCUSSION**

**CONCLUSION**

- The InteRACT program has resulted in clinically significant changes in the functional communicative activities and participation of the participants.
- Though preliminary data provide further justification for intensive aphasia treatment.
- Further research should examine long term maintenance and development of functional skills.