

*The sex ratio of stuttering prevalence for boys and girls in early childhood is more or less balanced; 1.5:1, while the sex ratio for adult men and women is 4-5:1. The change in prevalence between the sexes with increasing age leads to the assumption that girls recover from stuttering more frequently than boys do. Stuttering symptoms are usually characterized by repetitions or prolongations of sounds, syllables or words, pauses and breaks that disrupt the flow of speech. For many individuals, it is not the actual speech behavior that determines if there is a stuttering problem, but covert behaviors such as word omission, substitution and circumlocution. The variation of symptoms between individuals may lead to the assumption that girls' symptoms are different than boys' because they find strategies to hide the overt stuttering which make it appear as if natural recovery has occurred.*

Research questions *What is the prevalence and sex distribution of stuttering in 7-12 year olds diagnosed with stuttering at the age of 2-4 years? Do the stuttering symptoms differ between girls and boys? Can parents identify stuttering in their children, given that stuttering symptoms aren't always notable?*

Procedure *Follow up of school children aged 7-12, referred to a SLP specialized in stuttering and diagnosed with stuttering at an age of 2-4. Assessment of speech fluency from video recorded conversational speech; evaluation of social, emotional and cognitive aspects of communication and self-esteem by means of self assessment questionnaires. A parental questionnaire was used to investigate to if the parents thought that their child still stuttered.*

*The prevalence of stuttering and stuttering frequency was measured. The stuttering children's results on the questionnaires measuring aspects of communication and self-esteem were compared to the results of the non-stuttering children.*

Results: *The distribution between the sexes for self-reported persistent stuttering was 1.4:1 (m/f), whereas the parents reported a sex ratio of 3.4:1 (m/f). No difference in symptomatology of stuttering related to sex was observed. Self-esteem in both girls and boys who stuttered was found to be equivalent to that of the non-stuttering girls and boys. However, the children with persistent stuttering had a more negative attitude to communication than their fluently speaking peers.*

Conclusion *The findings from this study emphasise the importance of being aware of gender issues in contact with clients who stutter. Also, a thorough evaluation of the speaker's perspective of the condition is called for in the assessment of people who stutter.*