

Perspectives Of Aphasia Patients And Caregivers On Effectiveness Of Speech Therapy In Enhancing Communication Skills In Nairobi County

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to assess the perspectives of aphasia patients and their caregivers on the effectiveness of speech therapy in enhancing communication skills in Nairobi County. The study was guided by Higgins' discrepancy theory and Schaffer's fulfillment theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design, focusing on aphasia patients and their caregivers, as well as speech therapists in Nairobi County. Purposive sampling technique was employed in selection of study participants. A pilot study was carried out at a Hospital in Nairobi City to determine the reliability and validity of the research instruments. Data was collected via the administration of questionnaires to the patients and caregivers, and interview guides were used for the speech therapists. The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the collected data. The study findings show that more than a half of the respondents were positive about the role played by speech therapy in enhancing communication after brain damage. The study suggests that the Ministry of Health and similar organizations should increase awareness of the importance of speech therapy for communication issues caused by brain damage. Moreover, caregivers should be empowered by providing them with understanding, resources, and consideration of their needs, thereby making them essential partners in the speech therapy process for individuals with aphasia.

Keywords: Perspectives, Speech Therapy, Communication Skills, Aphasia Patients

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I. Introduction

Background information

Satisfaction with health care can be attributed to personal interpretation of health care services and its providers collectively (Sawyer et al, 2013). Capturing the views of patients plays a role in helping to ascertain the degree of their satisfaction and the best way in which to provide them with the best healthcare. The World Health Organization, (WHO, 1948), spells out health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not just the absence of disease or infirmity. As per this definition, communication ability can be termed as one of the determinants of good health. It is a highly complex process involving the incorporation of physical, cognitive and language skills (MEDIAmaker, 2022).

Brain damage is one of the leading causes of communication impairment. Communication problems are quite common following brain injury. The type of communication challenge that affects the survivor varies and relies on how the person functioned before the injury and the parts of the brain damaged (MEDIAmaker, 2022). The condition that results from a brain injury that affects one's ability to communicate is called aphasia. Mayo clinic (2022) states that Aphasia can affect the victim's speech as well as the way one writes and understands both spoken and written language. Aphasia usually occurs suddenly after a stroke or a head injury. It is a common complication of stroke with a prevalence of one million in the United States alone (Berube and Hillis, 2019). According to Wendro and Davis (2022), stroke is a result of part of the brain loses its blood supply and stops working. It causes the part of the body that the injured part commands to stop working.

Another major cause of aphasia is traumatic brain injury (TBI). Traumatic brain injury, a term used to describe head injury or trauma, could result from motor vehicle and motor cycle accidents, falls, assaults and from pedestrians being hit by motor vehicles (Yatto & Tabish, 2008). Any type of brain damage/ head injury that occurs after birth is referred to as acquired brain injury (ABI); which could result from blows to the head, alcohol and drug use or even oxygen deprivation. People who survive brain damage face challenges that are either transient or permanent in their entire lives depending on seriousness and the injury site in the brain.

Motor and cognitive impairments are common repercussions of the many problems faced by a person with brain damage. Oratory complications are among the most frequently reported challenges by patients and their families (Gindri et al., 2014).

Based on the part of the brain damaged, aphasia can be categorized as expressive, comprehensive or global aphasia (Mayo Clinic, 2018). Once the type of aphasia has been established and speech and language therapy stands out as the major treatment plan. High intensity speech therapy has been proven to improve outcome. This however will require the availability of a sufficient number of qualified speech therapists. Speech and language pathologists (SLPs) work with patients suffering from all types of communication challenges. They test the person's speech, language, cognitive skills as well as the swallowing ability. Speech language therapy (SLT) is an effective and common intervention for communication challenges after any brain injury.

The effectiveness of speech therapy will be dependent on many aspects among them the client's perspective or attitude towards speech therapy services. A client's perspective is not simply a matter of the individual's preference but will always be affected by personal, social and cultural factors (Population Reference Bureau, 2002). Babbit's (2014) study findings on aphasia intervention techniques demonstrate significant improvements on language and activity measures on Aphasia patients from prior to treatment to after the treatment. In a study, in the United States, thirteen out of the 18 aphasia participants in tele rehabilitation treatment for aphasia reported to experience significant improvement (Jacobs et al, 2021). In another study in North Carolina on Examination of aphasia post-treatment satisfaction Jacobs et al, (2021), indicated that satisfaction was eminently predictive of effectiveness

In Canada according to Margaret (2017), in her treatment study carried out on a total of 3200 aphasia patients who were categorized under SLT versus no SLT, found some evidence that an SLT intervention accords improvement in functional communication ability compared with no SLT intervention. In the UK parents' sentiments about speech therapy, both in the interviews and in the survey of activities, were mainly positive (Roulstone et al, (2015). They reported a high likelihood that there exists a relationship between parents' levels of satisfaction and their views of the therapists' successful outcome in engaging their child. In India a study on 3 aphasia patients receiving semantic cueing of verbs (SCVTr) therapy for 20 sessions indicated that SCVTr therapy was found to be effective in rectifying word retrieval deficits in people with aphasia. (Deepak & Goswami, 2020).

In South Africa a study on Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Clinical Training and Service in the Era of COVID-19 by Khoza-Shangase et al, (2021), revealed that speech practice does produce favorable outcomes. In Kenya, Kinyanjui (2016) study indicates that there are no accurate numbers available on the prevalence of aphasia or other communication challenges due to brain damages in Kenya. A study by Waweru and Gatimu, (2021) highlights that though brain damage due to stroke is a serious problem in Kenya, the existing documentation is of low quality and quite restricted in guiding policy development and improving healthcare for patients with aphasia or communication challenges arising from brain damage.

Manyeti (2012), noted that though the significance of getting the views of patients is increasingly acknowledged, insight into their opinions on good general practice care is rather still limited. Manyeti (2012) reported that healthcare providers now acknowledge that the quality of care they provide greatly determines their overall success in attracting the clients and in meeting their needs. The involvement of a speech and language pathologist (SLP) in the multidisciplinary team providing care for brain damage victims is of great significance. The main objective of speech therapy is to maximize a patient's communication, accelerated by family involvement that is also quite important in each treatment phase.

Stephens (2017) reported that SLT interventions provide improvement in functional communication ability. However, despite the fact that head injury that leads to aphasia is a common incapacitating condition, facilities for rehabilitation are few. Kinyanjui (2016), noted that in Kenya there are no post hospital rehabilitation centers for brain injury survivors. There are, however, a few Speech therapists addressing communication challenges among patients with aphasia who are mostly working in the private sector and a few hospitals, mostly private, where speech therapy services are provided to aphasia patients. It is however not clear whether the patients receiving speech therapy services and their caregivers are satisfied with the services they are receiving or not. The patients' and their caregivers' perspectives or attitudes, thoughts and commitment to speech therapy process is not only crucial in the speech therapy process but also critical to their own recovery. The purpose of this study therefore is to establish the perspectives of aphasia patients and their caregivers on the effectiveness of speech therapy in enhancing communication in Nairobi County.

Statement of the Problem

Globally, brain injury is a leading cause of admission in hospitals with language and communication problems, especially aphasia, as one of the major repercussions. These problems can cause psychosocial ill health - frustrations, conflict and misunderstanding not only to the patient but to their family members, friends and caregivers (Mayo Clinic, 2019). Life after brain injury changes a person perpetually touching not only the

lives of the survivors but also that of the general family. Working-age adults with aphasia always experience challenges in social participation especially in fulfilling social roles and reintegrating into communities.

Speech therapists work with the aphasia patients in order to restore their communication abilities. They also teach the patients different ways to communicate if the language skills have been affected by the injury. Aphasia patients' recovery is in a way influenced by their perspectives on the services they are receiving. Their views on the methodologies being applied, the cost of the services versus the quality in terms of the SLP's competency is quite vital. Research exists on the impact of brain injury on victim's lives and the role played by the SLP in the rehabilitation of speech. Literature regarding people with aphasia is mainly based on studies conducted in high-income countries thus limiting hypothesizing of findings. The perspectives of aphasia patients and their caregivers on the quality of speech therapy services they receive from speech therapists in Kenya and its efficacy in enhancing their communication skills has not been documented. In Kenya, there is neither literature on the involvement of aphasia patients' caregivers in speech therapy process nor the caregivers' views on the efficacy of the therapy in enhancing communication skills of aphasia patients. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the perspectives of aphasia patients and their caregivers on the effectiveness of speech therapy in enhancing communication Nairobi County.

Study Objective

The objective of the study was to determine aphasia patients' and caregivers' extent of satisfaction with speech therapy in enhancing communication in Nairobi County.

Significance of the Study

This study on the perspectives of brain damaged patients with aphasia and their caregivers on the effectiveness of speech therapy in enhancing communication is a learning paradigm that will enhance the researcher's knowledge and skills. The project's key goal is academic to help improve competence, develop research skills and partially fulfil the conditions for the award of masters in speech and language pathology. Findings of this study may create knowledge in SLP studies by filling in the identified knowledge gap and also form a basis for future research on SLP and related fields. The researcher is of the view that the data generated may be instrumental in policy and guideline formulation in addressing the national burden of aphasia. The discoveries of the research may also be helpful to SLP trainers in enabling them plan the extent of involvement of caregivers in speech therapy and in coming up with relevant intervention strategies to use in speech therapy. The researcher also expects that the study findings may assist to draw specifications on therapy in the planning for prevention and health promotion among people with aphasia in the community. The findings may also help SLP trainers to lay emphasis on key doctrines of SLP competency when handling patients with aphasia.

Theoretical Framework

This study presumed consumer models of satisfaction with healthcare services. It was guided by two theories: the fulfilment theory and discrepancy theory. The fulfilment theory was developed by Robert H. Schaffer (1953). The theory states that overall job satisfaction compares directly with the extent to which the needs of an individual which can be satisfied in a job are satisfied. The stronger the need, the more closely the satisfaction will rely on its fulfilment. The theory is grounded on the assumption that the extent to which people feel satisfied or dissatisfied pegs on the degree of their needs and desires. The advocates of the fulfilment theory measure satisfaction in terms of the extent to which the customers' needs are satisfied. Individuals differ in their perceptions, background, personality, and even experience, and as a result can be satisfied or motivated by rather different factors. Patients with aphasia will be satisfied with speech therapy based on the level to which their needs are fulfilled. Such patients with communication challenges will go for speech therapy services with set communication goals that if not met will lead to dissatisfaction with the therapy process. On the other hand, if these set goals are met, or are closely met, then the patient or client will register satisfaction with therapy.

The Self-discrepancy theory on the other hand was introduced by psychologist E. Tory Higgins (1987). In this theory, Higgins proposes that individuals actually possess different types of self-guides, or standards to which they compare their current self. These comparisons indicate that individuals are either close to their self-guides or distant from them. In the case of closeness to self-guides, these individuals experience positive effect. On the other hand, in case of a discrepancy from these self-guides, the person experience negative effect. This effect is determined by the type of self-guide an individual uses for comparison. Individuals facing communication difficulties might measure themselves against ideal self-guides, reflecting their aspirations, or against self-guides representing their duties or commitments. The extent of discrepancy is related to the experience of negative effect to the extent that the greater the discrepancy, the greater the negative effect. Patients with aphasia may have a self-guide or standard against which they compare their current communication prowess. Such patients will grade the effect of therapy and therapy services based on how close these are to helping achieve their self-guides. Such patients will therefore be satisfied with the therapy process

as long as the outcome does not deviate from their expectations. As long as their communication ability improves, and as long as this improvement is close to the self-guides to which they are currently comparing themselves, a positivity will be registered. The further they feel they are to these self-guides, the higher their degree of dissatisfaction with the therapy process.

II. Methodology

Area of Study

The research focused on aphasia patients and their caregivers in Nairobi County, which is one of the forty-seven counties in Kenya and serves as the capital city. Situated at an altitude of 1,670 meters above sea level, Nairobi County covers an area of 696 km². The selection of Nairobi County for the study was based on its high number of private and public hospitals equipped with running speech clinics. Nairobi County also holds the highest number of speech therapists.

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design. Bhat (2021) defines research design as the framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher. It is a framework for planning your research and answering research questions (McCombes, 2019). Descriptive design, according to McCombes (2019), describes a population, situation, or phenomenon as it is without any form of manipulation. This design was considered fit for the study as it allowed the researcher to report the findings of the research as they are without any external interference. The design also enabled the researcher to obtain qualitative and quantitative data.

Population and Sampling Design

The study targeted 30 aphasia patients and their caregivers in Nairobi City County. The study also targeted 3 speech therapists operating in Nairobi County. Included in the study was aphasia patients who were attending speech therapy, those who had completed speech therapy sessions and their caregivers. However, aphasia patients and their caregivers who had never attended speech therapy sessions were excluded from this study. Purposive sampling technique was applied to select a sample from the population of aphasia patients and their caregivers. The study purposely utilized only those brain damaged patients identified with in Nairobi county and their caregivers. The sample size consisted of the 8 aphasia patients and 6 caregivers who regularly accompanied them to therapy sessions who were also willing to participate in the study. It also consisted of 2 speech therapists practicing in Nairobi.

Data Collection

The study employed the use of structured questionnaires and guided interview guides for data collection. The researcher used structured questionnaires to collect information from the patients and their caregivers. The questionnaire were simple as some of the patients were not in a position to effectively answer verbal questions. A questionnaire according to (Mcleod, 2018) is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The researcher used questionnaires as they are an efficient way of acquiring quality information from a sample of subjects. Questionnaires are a good means of measuring the behavior, attitudes, preferences, opinion and intentions of respondents cheaply and more quickly than other research instruments.

An interview schedule is a sequence of structured questions designed to guide researchers throughout an interview. Taherdoost (2022) defines an interview as the method of asking questions to gain both qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher held interviews with the speech therapists. The speech therapists were in a better position to theoretically express themselves compared to the patients and the caregivers. Interviews offer a researcher with an avenue to help out participants and obtain inputs in the desired details. As such, some questions needed probing which was easier done with the speech therapists. Additionally, the SLPs are better positioned to give the medical history of the patient, intervention strategies employed and the percentage improvement, if any, noted in the patients.

III. Results And Discussions

Extent of satisfaction with speech therapy in enhancing communication

In order to determine the extent of satisfaction of the aphasia patients and their caregivers with speech therapy in enhancing communication, this was addressed through questionnaires administered to respondents in which they were required to state the number of therapy sessions attended per week and whether adequate or not, whether satisfied with amount of time spent with the therapists, confidence with the skills of therapist, importance of therapy and rate of improvement after therapy, satisfaction with therapy services received and recommendations for therapy services. The results are presented below under each of these items. The results on

the question of number of therapy sessions attended per week, adequacy, satisfaction and confidence are presented in table 3.1

Table 3.1: Extent of satisfaction with speech therapy

		Caregivers N. (%)	Patients N. (%)	Total N. (%)
Sessions attended	1-2	4 (66.67)	5(62.5)	9(64.9)
	3-5	1(16.67)	1(12.5)	2(14.29)
	Above 5	1(16.67)	2(25)	3(21.43)
Adequacy	Yes	2(33.33)	5(62.5)	7(50)
	NO	4(66.67)	3(37.5)	7(50)
Satisfaction with time spent with therapist	YES	2(33.33)	5(62.5)	7(50)
	NO	4(66.67)	3(37.5)	7(50)
Confidence with the therapists' skills	Very confident	3(50)	8(100)	11(78.57)
	Confident	1(16.67)	0	1(7.14)
	Unsure	2(33.33)	0	2(14.29)

As per table 3.1, most of the respondents attended 1 to 2 sessions per week, only 2 indicated attending 3-5 sessions while another 3 attended more than 5 sessions per week. When expressing their satisfaction with the time spent with the therapist per session, a number of the caregivers expressed satisfaction with the duration of therapy sessions between the therapist and client. One caregiver noted that their patient was often exhausted after a one-hour session, suggesting that extending the time would be overwhelming for them. On the other hand, an overwhelming majority of caregivers believed that speech sessions should be longer than an hour due to concerns that patients may not have enough time to learn new concepts within this timeframe; two caregivers reported such instances where learning was cut short due to timing constraints. Of the total number of patients, 5 (62.5%) individuals expressed contentment with the duration of their speech therapy sessions, whereas the remaining 3 (37.5%) conveyed a preference for longer sessions. One among these three participants specifically mentioned that an hour was insufficient and would benefit from additional time allocation. These findings leads to the researcher's conclusion on the need for longer therapy sessions to accommodate patients' learning needs adequately. However, the researcher also feels there is a need of balancing session length with patient fatigue and individual capacity, suggesting that personalized approaches to session duration should be necessary.

Pertaining their level of confidence in their therapist. The majority of respondents, accounting for 78.57%, expressed a high level of confidence in the speech therapist's skills. Of this group, three were caregivers - comprising 50% of all caregivers surveyed - while eight were patients, representing the entire patient population. One caregiver reported feeling only moderately confident, whereas two others expressed uncertainty regarding the therapist's abilities. The results reinforce the assertion made by Xesfingi & Vozikis (2016) that patient satisfaction serves as a crucial metric for evaluating healthcare quality, offering insights into providers' ability to meet their clients' expectations effectively. This findings help conclude that the level of satisfaction with speech therapy was relatively high which was portrayed by the surveyed population generally holding a positive perception of their speech therapists. However, the importance of addressing any concerns or uncertainties is acknowledged to further improve the quality of care provided.

The results on the question of importance of therapy in helping the patients' condition before and after treatment and the rate of improvement after therapy are presented in table 3.2

Table 3.2: Importance of therapy in helping the patients' condition before and after treatment and the rate of improvement after therapy

		Caregivers N. (%)	Patients N. (%)	Total N. (%)
Importance of speech therapy before treatment	V. important	3(50)	1(12.5)	4(28.57)
	Important	2(33.33)	0	2(14.29)
	Unsure	0	7(87.5)	7 (50)
	Not important	1(16.67)	0	1(7.14)
Rate of improvement after therapy	100	0	0	0
	50-90	3(50)	5(62.5)	8(57.14)
	1-49	2(33.33)	3(37.5)	5(35.71)
	Not at all	16.67%	0	1(7.14)
Importance of speech therapy following treatment	V. important	2(33.33)	6(75)	8(57.14)
	Important	3(50)	2(25)	5(35.71)
	Not important	1(16.67)	0	1(7.14)

According to table 3.2, prior to treatment, 87.5% of the patients expressed uncertainty regarding the significance of speech therapy, while only 12.25% had deemed it as highly important. Among caregivers, 50%

considered speech therapy to be very important, 33.33% regarded it as important and a minority of 16.67% did not perceive its importance.

On the rate of improvement following speech therapy a majority of respondents reported substantial enhancements in communication, ranging from 50-90%, following initial treatment. Notably, this group included three caregivers (constituting 50% of the total six) and five patients (accounting for 62.5% of all eight). Additionally, five respondents - comprising two caregivers (equivalent to 33.33% of the six) and three patients (representing 37.5% of the eight) - acknowledged moderate improvements within a range of 1-49%. Interestingly, only one caregiver (16.67% of the six) noted no improvement in their patient's communication skills after treatment initiation. From the data presented, the researcher concluded that speech therapy has a generally positive impact on communication skills. The fact that both caregivers and patients experienced significant improvements suggests that the therapy is effective across different demographics. The acknowledgment of moderate improvements by another group of respondents further strengthened the notion that speech therapy yields positive outcomes for a significant portion of individuals, even if the improvements are not as pronounced. However, the researcher also noted the case where one caregiver reported no improvement in their patient's communication skills. While this is only one instance, it prompts the researcher to peg this on the potential factors that may have contributed to this lack of improvement, such as the specific type or intensity of therapy received, or underlying conditions of the patient.

On the importance of speech therapy in helping patients condition after treatment, 57.14 % of the respondents indicated that speech therapy played a significant role in improving communication for aphasia patients. The group consisted of 6 patients accounting for 75% of the 8 patients and 2 caregivers accounting for 33.33 % of the 6 caregivers. This percentage is a positive deviation prior to treatment. Of the remaining, 62.50% that is 3 caregivers (50% of the 6) and 2 patients (25 % of the 8) felt that speech therapy as important after treatment. In contrast, one caregiver (16.67% of the 6) felt that speech was not important. The responses from the majority of respondents are in line with the findings of Law et al. (2003), whose research indicated that speech therapy had a positive effect on communication skills in cases of communication disorders.

Based on the data provided, the researcher concluded that speech therapy plays a significant role in improving communication for aphasia patients, as indicated by the majority of respondents. However, the researcher also noted the dissenting opinion of one caregiver who felt that speech therapy was not important after treatment which points to the fact that there are potential areas for improvement in speech therapy programs. Overall, the researcher concluded that speech therapy is a valuable and effective intervention for aphasia patients. The results on the question of satisfaction with speech therapy in enhancing communication and whether the respondents would recommend speech therapy to people with communication challenges are presented in table 3.3

Table 3.3: Satisfaction of the respondents with speech therapy

		<u>Caregivers</u> N. (%)	<u>Patients</u> N. (%)	<u>Total</u> N. (%)
Satisfaction with speech therapy in enhancing communication	V. satisfied	2(33.33)	5(62.5)	7 (50)
	Somewhat satisfied	3(50)	3(37.5)	6(42.86)
	Dissatisfied	1(16.67)	0	1(7.14)
	Somewhat dissatisfied	0	0	0
	Very dissatisfied	0	0	0
Recommending speech therapy to people with communication challenges.	<u>YES</u>	3(50)	8(100)	11(78.57)
	<u>NO</u>	3(50)	0	3(21.43)
	1-49	2(33.33)	0	2(14.29)

According to table 3.3, half of the total respondents - comprising five patients and two caregivers reported being highly content with speech therapy as a means of improving communication. Meanwhile, almost half - specifically 48.86% or three patients and three caregivers in total expressed some level of satisfaction with the treatment's efficacy. The remaining 16.67%, consisting of one caregiver, conveyed dissatisfaction regarding speech therapy's ability to enhance communication skills. Similar conclusions were drawn by Tousignant et al. (2018), who discovered that aphasia patients and their caregivers expressed greater satisfaction with speech therapy interventions following improvements in patients' functional communication. Likewise, McLeod et al. (2020) concurred, noting that therapy led to significantly improved speech outcomes, correlating with heightened caregiver satisfaction.

The interviewees shared similar views regarding patient and caregiver satisfaction with speech therapy. They observed that upon referral, some patients and caregivers arrive with very high expectations, often

anticipating immediate and significant results. They reported instances where patients and caregivers mistakenly believe that medication will be part of the therapy process, leading to disappointment when they discover that speech therapy focuses on non-pharmacological interventions. The therapists observed that the expectations of attendees at speech sessions vary depending on the severity of the damage. In most cases, caregivers tend to have higher expectations compared to the patients themselves. This heightened expectation among caregivers can be attributed to their direct involvement in the patient's care and their awareness of the impact of the condition, particularly evident in cases like Wernicke's aphasia, where the patient may be unaware of their speech challenges. Conversely, in cases of Broca's aphasia, patients are often more aware of the frustrations caused by their speech impediments. This increased awareness of their condition may lead to a greater sense of urgency and expectation for improvement. As a result, they may sometimes have higher expectations for therapy outcomes.

When questioned about caregiver satisfaction with therapy, the practitioners highlighted several concerns. SLP 2 noted that due to the high cost of therapy in Kenya, some caregivers view practitioners with suspicion, believing that they are primarily motivated by financial gain. Additionally, SLP 2 mentioned that certain caregivers harbor negative attitudes towards speech therapy. SLP 1 mentioned that some caregivers perceive therapy as burdensome, leading them to selectively follow instructions, disregarding some while adhering to others. This selective adherence can hinder the effectiveness of therapy.

Furthermore, the therapists indicated that various individual factors influence therapy efficacy. For instance, according to SLP 1, a patient's career and social status can impact their motivation to engage in therapy. For example, a chairman may feel a heightened inner motivation to speak due to the demands of their job. Similarly, SLP 2 suggested that introverted patients may show less enthusiasm for therapy compared to extroverted individuals. Both speech therapists indicated that most of the patients seeking for speech services had a good education background. Those consistent with therapy sessions always had some improvement and were always quite encouraged by the improvement. SLP 2 expressed satisfaction with the positive outcomes observed in speech therapy sessions noting that some patients, initially nonverbal, gradually began to vocalize words and demonstrate improved ability to follow instructions over time. This progress was accompanied by a notable sense of appreciation from the patients, highlighting the effectiveness of the therapy in enhancing their communication skills and overall well-being. Based on the data presented, the researcher felt that overall, there was a significant level of satisfaction with speech therapy as a means of improving communication.

As per table 3.3, in regards to recommending speech therapy to people with communication challenges, of the 14 participants, half of the caregivers (3 out of 6) expressed their inclination to recommend speech therapy as a viable option for individuals with aphasia, on the other hand, the other half declined to do so. On the other hand, all patients responded positively, indicating that they would wholeheartedly suggest speech therapy to others in need. To summarize, a significant majority comprising 11 respondents (or 78.57%) were in favor of recommending speech therapy while only three (21.43%) did not share this sentiment.

These results help strengthen Dahlberg et al (2007) findings that the overall life satisfaction of patients and their caregivers significantly improved after speech intervention. They help the researcher in concluding that there is a strong inclination towards recommending speech therapy for individuals with aphasia, particularly from the perspective of patients. However, the differing perspectives among caregivers warrant further exploration to understand the reasons behind their reluctance to recommend speech therapy. Speech therapy is generally well-received and recommended by patients with communication challenges, suggesting its substantial impact on enhancing life satisfaction for both patients and caregivers thus helping the researcher conclude that recommending speech therapy is closely linked with the increased life satisfaction reported by respondents.

IV. Conclusions And Recommendations

Conclusion

The findings of the study led to the following conclusions: First, it was evident from the findings that more than a half of the respondents were positive about the role played by speech therapy in enhancing communication after brain damage. Secondly, caregivers were confident in the skills of their speech therapists. While a number of the caregivers and all patients were comfortable about time and number of sessions, most of the caregivers wanted more sessions per week with longer speech hours. The findings of this study align with previous research, emphasizing the necessity for therapists to consistently adjust and tailor therapy objectives to meet the unique needs of patients, highlighting the need to involve caregivers in the therapy process and creating a conducive environment for quality services. These findings help the researcher emphasize on the importance of patient-centered care in speech therapy practice and highlight the need for therapists to continually adapt and customize therapy objectives to address the specific challenges and goals of each patient, particularly in cases of aphasia where therapy objectives may vary significantly. These implications indicate the importance of having ongoing efforts towards enhancing the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of speech

therapy services, with a focus on patient-centered care, and, caregiver involvement which gets a boost from communication clarity from therapists.

Recommendations

- i) The Ministry of Health and affiliated organizations to spread awareness through community workshops, education programs, and media partnerships to raise wider awareness of the need of speech therapy for communication issues resulting from brain damage.
- ii) Caregivers need to be empowered in terms of understanding, having access to resources and taking into account their wants and needs to become an integral part of the speech therapy journey for patients with aphasia.

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