PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS STUTTERING: AN EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY OF AN IRISH POPULATION

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I RISH PEOPLE ARE..

Your Expectations..
Meanwhile In Ireland
LEARNING OUTCOMES

- What is an attitude?
- What is a stereotype?
- Previous research: Irish attitudes
- Brief overview of POSHA-S
- Attitude towards stuttering in Ireland
- Irish attitudes vs. International attitudes towards stuttering
DEFINING ATTITUDE

“An overall evaluation of an object that is based on

- Cognitive
- Affective
- Behavioural information

(Maoi & Haddock, 2010, p.4).
Cognitive
• Drink a lot

Affective
• Feel uncomfortable in social situations
• Pressure to drink
• Negative attitude drinking culture

Behavioural
• Go to the pub
• Drink more

Irish People
Definition of Stereotypes

- Cognitive function of attitudes
- The over-generalised way of labelling people
- An fixed image or idea of a particular type of person
- An assumption based on inaccurate, preconceived ideas and misinformation
- Selectively placing people in categories

(Yuker, 1988)
STUTTERING STEREOTYPE

- Psychological Problem
- Shy
- Nervous
- Introverted
- Anxious

I'm Not Anti-social
Society is Anti-me
EFFECTS OF STEREOTYPING

- Prejudice
- Stigma
- Discrimination
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To determine:

- Public attitude towards stuttering in Ireland

- Factors contributing to attitudes formation:
  (Age, gender, education, experience)

- Irish attitudes vs International attitudes (POSHA-S database)
HISTORIC ATTITUDES IN IRELAND
LEAHY (2005)

- Irish renowned for eloquence of speech
- 7th & 8th century AD: Acceptance
- Protected by Irish legal system
- Wordlessness entitled to time
IRISH STUDIES

Griffin and Leahy (2007)

- Children (3-5 years) perceived the puppet with a moderate stutter more negatively.
- Did not influence selection of favourite puppet or desire to be friends.

Hartford & Leahy (2007):

- 6-13 year olds
  - Negative attributes for speaker who stuttered
- 8-13 years: more negative attributes than 6-8 yr olds
- 11-13 years: preferred to befriend the fluent speaker.
INTERNATIONAL ATTITUDES

- Awareness and knowledge of Stuttering in
  - Belgium (Van Borsel Verniers & Bouvry, 1999)
  - Rio de Janero (Pereira, Rossi & Van Borsel, 2009)
  - Shanghai (Ming, Jing, Wen & Van Borsel, 2001).

- Reduced knowledge re: etiology
POSJA-S STUDIES

- Kuwait (Al-Khaledi et al. 2009): Negative attitudes attributed to personalities and abilities of PWS.

- Turkey (Özdemir, R.S., St. Louis, K.O., & Topbaş, S., 2011): More negative attitudes than average.

Similarities

- Stuttering stereotype
- Limited Knowledge
- Level of education
POSZA-S DEVELOPMENT

- International Project on Attitudes towards Human Attributes (IPATHA)


- Public attitudes towards stigmatising conditions worldwide

- Stuttering attitudes compared to other stigmatising conditions e.g. mental health
POSHA-S STIMULI RELATIVE TO THE MULTI-COMPONENT MODEL OF ATTITUDES.
METHODOLOGY

- Epidemiological
- POSHA-s methodology
- Quantitative study
- Case control survey
Random sampling

Blind selection of gatekeepers who distributed surveys
PARTICIPANTS

- N=37 (82.2% return rate)
- Age 18 years and over.
- Resident in Ireland for more than five years.
- 21 males, 18 females
- Population size does not influence results (St Louis, 2008)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irish Sample</th>
<th>POSHA-S Database</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age: Mean (yr)</strong></td>
<td>31.77</td>
<td>33.52 (median)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age: Range (yr)</strong></td>
<td>18.5-62.4 yr</td>
<td>11.82-63.35 yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Education: Mean (yr)</strong></td>
<td>15.14</td>
<td>14.95 (median)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Education: Range (yr)</strong></td>
<td>12-21 yr</td>
<td>4.78-20.32 yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender: Males/Females (% total)</strong></td>
<td>56.76%/43.24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANALYSIS

- POSHA-S procedure

- General descriptive statistics used to explore patterns and preliminary associations between gender, age, educational level and attitudes, knowledge and beliefs about stuttering.

- Mean ratings obtained for the sample compared the POSHA-S database.

- Percentile ranks of mean ratings for POSHA-S
DOMINANT PUBLIC ATTITUDES IN IRELAND?

- 55% neutral impression of PWS
- 11% negative impression

- Significant association between gender and overall impression of a PWS – females reporting more positive impression of PWS
ATTITUDES & BELIEFS

- PWS can lead normal lives

- Uncertain if PWS should have jobs where they have to decide and understand important things
  - 13%: PWS should not have such roles
  - 30% unsure

- 37% agreed with the statement “PWS are nervous or excitable”

- 51.4% of the respondents agreed with the statement “PWS are shy or fearful”
REATIONS

- 83% reporting feeling patient.
- 97% would respond as though the PWS was speaking normally
- 37% would feel pity
- 78% would not offer advice
- 73% would not fill in PWS words
KNOWLEDGE

- 67%: little or some knowledge about stuttering.
- 56%: attributed the cause of stuttering to a frightening event
- 21% genetics
- 64% knowledge of stuttering came from personal experience
- No significant association found between those with personal experience with stuttering and overall impression
IRELAND VS. POSHA DATABASE

Irish sample held more positive beliefs than 60% of respondents on the archive. Irish respondents rated their potential higher than those on the database (74th percentile).
BELIEFS ABOUT PWS

- More positive than 60% of respondents on the archive.
- Potential rated higher (74\textsuperscript{th} percentile)
- More likely to believe that PWS can lead normal lives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSHA-S variable</th>
<th>Irish sample (mean, and corresponding percentiles in POSHA-S database)</th>
<th>POSHA-S database (median)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential: people who stutter ...</td>
<td>77 (74)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can make friends</td>
<td>95 (46)</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can lead normal lives</td>
<td>100 (81)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can do any job they want</td>
<td>70 (73)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should have jobs requiring good judgement</td>
<td>43 (49)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERSONALITIES OF PWS

- More likely to describe PWS as nervous/excitabale
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<tr>
<td>Nervous/excitable</td>
<td>0 (29)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shy or fearful</td>
<td>-22 (21)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT STUTTERING

- Lower range - 26th Percentile

- More likely to attribute cause of stuttering to frightening event (58th percentile)

- Less likely to attribute cause to genetics (4th percentile)
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<tr>
<td>Cause of stuttering:</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetic inheritance</td>
<td>-27 (4)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning habits</td>
<td>11 (30)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A very frightening event</td>
<td>30 (58)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An act of God</td>
<td>86 (79)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A virus or disease</td>
<td>89 (92)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghosts, demons or spirits</td>
<td>95 (63)</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REATIONS TOWARDS PWS

- More likely to react positively (71st percentile)
- Less likely to fill in words (77th percentile)
- Feel comfortable (67th percentile)
- Feel pity (46th percentile)
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<tr>
<td>Self-reactions to people who stutter</td>
<td>10 (71)</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping</td>
<td>59 (60)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to act like the person was talking normally</td>
<td>95 (81)</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill in the persons words</td>
<td>62 (77)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell the person to “slow down” or “relax”</td>
<td>65 (77)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make joke about stuttering</td>
<td>95 (71)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social distance/sympathy</td>
<td>26 (72)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Median ratings for means from samples currently available for POSHA-S components, sub-scores and total stuttering scores compared to the Irish sample (St. Louis, 2012, unpublished raw data)
The components of Attitudes Towards Stuttering in the Irish sample:

**Cognitive**
- frightening event.
- normal lives
- shy / nervous
- No Blame

**Affective**
- Neutral/positive impression.
- Would not wish to be a PWS.
- worried if they stuttered
- Feel comfortable.
- Pity

**Behavioural**
- not fill in words
- not make a joke
- not tell a PWS to relax.
- act as though the PWS is speaking normally.
“IT IS AN ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT ATTITUDES TO STUTTERING WILL NOT IMPROVE AS LONG AS PEOPLE REMAIN IGNORANT ABOUT THE TRUE NATURE OF THE DISORDER AND THE CHARACTERISTICS AND CAPABILITIES OF THOSE WHO LIVE WITH THE DISORDER”

(HULIT & WIRTZ 1994; 259)
THANKS FOR LISTENING!

Any Questions??