

Rejuvenating lost communication through script training

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Madam, if language is considered a tool of communication; it would be significant to mention the effectiveness of script training as an intervention therapy for patients who have lost their language due to aphasia.

Aphasia is an acquired language disorder of communication resulting from the damage to the focal areas of brain that are responsible to control language, characterized by symptoms on all levels of language dysfunction.¹ The most common cause of aphasia is Cardio Vascular Accident, i.e. stroke, acquiring aphasia as a result which constitutes 85% of all etiologies.² Jafar³, conducted a study in Karachi which reports a stroke prevalence of 4.8%, the highest ever reported prevalence of stroke in the world.³ The incidence of aphasia after an attack of stroke is about 30% in the acute phase of disease.⁴

Patients with aphasia developing severe dysfunction of language are unable to communicate normally⁵ and are presented with impaired comprehension, grammaticality, fluency, repetition skills and laborious word retrieval.⁶ This reduced ability to communicate negatively affects their functional, psychological and other everyday activities, and ultimately create a major individual and community health burden.⁵

There are many treatment programs available, however script training therapy shows positive outcomes in the production of practiced script. In script training, patients with aphasia are trained on short scripts or simple sentences for some weeks, using in-session therapy and its recordings. Treatment session may last 30-45 minutes with therapists along with daily homework practice. The content of script is selected by mutual consent of both patient and therapists with personal and real-world significance. Script training emphasizes on improving the

fluency of speech, attempts to restore the effortless, natural, and automatic language production for patients specifically with Broca's aphasia.⁶

Aphasia requires a long-term follow up treatment to ensure their contribution in full range of professional and social activities.⁷ So it is necessary to make script training a cost-effective medium using the facility of video calling/recordings to ensure to receive extensive script training sessions. This continuous help highlights the improvement of conversational skills and facilitates their involvement in everyday life activities.³

Regular speech therapy is an expensive treatment, and relatively neglectful for the patient's immediate needs, thus creating an alarming situation. Providing treatment facilities the latest treatment strategies like script training will obtain positive outcomes sooner. With the limited availability of speech disorder rehabilitation services in Pakistan, it will help these patients to restore their lost communicative ability with confidence and can assist in making them active member of their speech community, not a social burden.

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