

Non-pharmacological treatments for stuttering in children and adults: a systematic review and evaluation of clinical effectiveness, and exploration of barriers to successful outcomes

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Plain English summary

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What was the problem/question?

There is a wide range of treatments that are available for people who have a stutter. It can be difficult to know which treatments should be provided by the NHS as well as which treatments work best.

What did we do?

In this research we looked at the results of studies that have been carried out by researchers in different countries around the world. We wanted to find out how well treatments work and what people who stutter or their families think about the treatments.

What did we find?

We analysed 137 published papers in detail and categorised seven different types of papers describing treatments. Almost all the papers assessing these treatments found benefit from them for some people who stutter. However, the researchers frequently described a great deal of difference in results for people who had received the same therapy. When asked their views about therapy, people who stutter emphasise how their needs can change at different stages of life. They describe more helpful interventions as including emotional/psychological/social aspects in the therapy; 'real-world' practice; having follow-up sessions; and talking to other people who stutter.

What does this mean?

It was not possible to recommend any particular programmes that are more effective versus those that are less effective. All the various types seem to have some benefit for some participants but not for others. When selecting an intervention it is important to recognise factors important for an individual at their point in life.

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