

The effect of two speech and language approaches on speech problems in people with Parkinson's disease: the PD COMM RCT

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Disclaimer: This report contains transcripts of interviews conducted in the course of the research and contains language that may offend some readers.

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Plain language summary

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Plain language summary

Most people with Parkinson's disease develop difficulties with their speech and voice. Communicating becomes difficult. This affects their relationships, work, social life and how they feel about themselves. Our PD COMM trial compared two types of speech and language therapy to find out if they helped the speech and voice problems people with Parkinson's have. We measured changes in the way their voice and speech problems affected their lives and how much therapy cost the National Health Service and families.

Everyone taking part had speech or voice problems because of their Parkinson's disease. People could not take part if they had dementia, evidence of laryngeal pathology or previous laryngeal surgery or received speech and therapy for Parkinson's disease in the last 2 years.

People who agreed to take part joined one of three groups, which were alike except for the therapy they received. A computer decided which group they joined by chance.

- National Health Service speech and language therapy
- Lee Silverman Voice Treatment LOUD
- No speech and language therapy for 12 months

The 388 people who took part came from 41 outpatient clinics in Scotland, England and Wales. Most were older men. The people that received Lee Silverman Voice Treatment LOUD felt better about their speech and voice after 3 months compared to people in the other groups. A year later, they still felt better about it. People that received National Health Service therapy had no benefit compared to people with no access to therapy. Analysis of cost-effectiveness indicated that Lee Silverman Voice Treatment LOUD did not offer value for money and the intervention cost more because more speech and language therapy time was needed to deliver it. Our next question is to ask how we can provide Lee Silverman Voice Treatment LOUD in a way that costs less, for example, using therapy assistants and computer packages or at home. Clear speech and language therapy approaches for people with Parkinson's disease and speech or voice problems should be tested in trials that measure changes in people's lives.

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This article

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